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EDITORIAL

SINCE coming to London I have been astonished at the growth of office work during my absence, and at the congestion of records waiting to be reviewed, of correspondence and articles for which it is impossible to find room. It really looks as if we ought to publish THE GRAMOPHONE every fortnight instead of every month, and I hope that if we decide to do so we shall not lose the support of our readers and advertisers. A postcard of encouragement or of warning from our well-wishers would help me to reach a decision one way or the other.

The project of forming a society, which I outlined in the September number, has not by any means been abandoned, but is for the moment shelved, seeing that the recording companies have been so promptly willing to anticipate, and thus to frustrate, the avowed object of its formation—"to persuade the recording companies that there is an articulate body of potential buyers of records clamouring for the best and willing to pay for it." The Columbia list for April surpasses all previous lists in importance, the *Eighth Symphony* and the Mozart Quartet—not to mention a Beethoven piano sonata and another *Planet*—fulfilling my most pious hopes. A first hearing makes me think that the *Eighth Symphony* is the most successful big orchestral record I have yet heard of theirs; and the Lener Quartet records are exquisite.

There seem to be a fair number of new records in the double-sided Celebrity catalogue of the Gramophone Company—an important development, by the way, for which one or two of our correspondents, without much justice, give credit to THE GRAMOPHONE instead of to the Gramophone Company—but I have not heard them. Nor indeed have I heard the *Pétrouchka* records, but they are very welcome this month, as they have long been wanted and do not exist on player-piano rolls. As far as the result of our Symphony Competition is concerned, we are promised more than half the six chosen symphonies by H.M.V. in the moderately near future.

Not to be behind hand in this remarkable month's

issue, the Vocalion list includes a 4s. 6d. record of MacEwen's arrangement of French, Scotch, and Japanese dances played by the Spencer Dyke String Quartet, which we suggested in the November number. It is, perhaps, rather bold music with which to start, but I have no hesitation in saying that this is the finest chamber music record yet issued by the Aeolian Company, which is to be genuinely congratulated on its enterprise. I doubt if the Flonzaley Quartet is much nearer perfection than the Spencer Dyke Quartet, and certainly no British combination is so good.

Two suggestions made in the Editorial Notes last month have borne abundant fruit. Packets of records have been sent to about a dozen hospitals and institutions, the postage being paid by individual readers, till the office cupboard is emptied of its accumulations; and the request for a volunteer for the indexing of the first volume has been taken up by so many readers, all well qualified for the task, that the choice of a helper is almost embarrassing. I hope next month to be able to make an announcement about a public test of gramophones which we are trying to organise for a date near the beginning of June; and if it comes off it will be an opportunity for all our readers within reach of London to form a jury.

The Player-Piano Supplement is represented in this number by the amphibious "confession" of Mr. Lloyd Osbourne. If our P.-P. readers are aggrieved I shall be glad to hear from them, as I am not at present entirely convinced that a supplement, devoted exclusively to their interests, is needed. So many musical matters are of equal concern to supporters of the player-piano and of the gramophone.

As we go to Press I hear that The Gramophone Company are giving us the *Ninth Symphony* almost at once. This is something like an Easter Egg for Music!

Compton Mackenzie

VIOLIN RECORDS

By ALBERT SAMMONS

IT must be a joy to musical people who have gramophones to watch the great strides which are being made in the manufacture of records of classical music, and to be able to sit at home and have whole symphonies by an orchestra or a whole sonata by violin and piano at a moment's notice and without much trouble.

Personally, I don't altogether advocate whole symphonies, sonatas, and quartets. There are, of course, music lovers who know and like to follow the score of works, and they should be considered and catered for; but, on the other hand, there are also people sufficiently musical to want orchestral and chamber music among their records, but unable to afford six or eight lengthy records of expensive productions of one work, who yet would purchase, say, two or three of the best possible fragments of classical works.

In comparing new records with old it seems there is generally a great improvement. I chanced to hear a recent Columbia record of the first movement of the *D minor Sonata* of Brahms, by Catterall and Murdoch, and I thought it almost perfect both in recording and in the playing. It must be very satisfactory to pianists to know that the piano (hitherto looked upon as a bad instrument for recording) now holds its own with the fiddle and voice (as in the Brahms record referred to).

One critic said that it wasn't always possible to pick out the melody in the piano part, and that the violin should keep under in parts to allow the piano a chance to stand out more clearly in its solo passages. This, however, is no fault of the ensemble of the players; both Catterall and Murdoch are past-masters of chamber music playing, but to have as perfect a performance as one could get on the concert platform would entail more than the present amount of expense and work allowed for recording. It would be necessary to have two or three finished

records, so that the players could (pencil and music in hand) mark every passage as they listened, so as to be able to give and take accordingly for the final and master record. Even then a good deal would be left to chance. At times it would be necessary for the violin to play very softly to allow the piano its equal share of tone; also the pianist would at times require almost to *overplay* in order to get the balance right, owing to the fact that in many passages of difficulty the violinist wouldn't always find it possible to play softly enough, and generally the piano is harder to "get through"

when the two instruments are going full strength, unlike in a concert hall, where it is generally the reverse. Also the violinist is nearer the horn when recording.

Producing records is, after all, an expensive venture, and it would need someone in the nature of a millionaire to make the possibilities of recording as we should like to have it, and to cater for the public requiring perfect records. Still, it is a hundred per cent.



better than it was a few years ago, owing to the experience of recorder and artist, the latter having to play quite differently from what he is accustomed to on the concert platform.

I don't make a point of hearing records up-to-date, but I can at least recall some old records that hold their own with the best new ones. The quintet of Schumann, played by Mrs. Hobday and the London String Quartet, is remarkably clear and well balanced, as is also a piano quartet of St. Saëns, in which Mark Hambourg and Miss Marjorie Hayward played.

Out of something like one hundred chamber music records I have taken part in, I am most pleased with the string quintet of Mozart in G minor, for two violins, two violas, and 'cello, made under interesting circumstances during the war. Messrs. Petre, Waldo-Warner, Warwick-Evans, Alfred Hobday,

and myself recorded this work on the morning of the first daylight air raid over London. We were startled by a loud report, but thought it was nothing more than a burst motor tyre: but on hearing a second and louder report, and seeing people running about in the street below, we knew what was taking place. After all was over we returned to our work, and struck a lucky hit in making a splendid record of the aforementioned work. I say lucky, because of the different position in the seating formation of the quintet. A lot is left to chance when more than two players join forces, and are crowding into a small space with scarcely bowing room, etc.

It will be welcome to the string artist when the demand for chamber music records is as great as the demand for the light solo pieces which are so plentiful in the lists of gramophone records. One

must not blame too readily the players for the fact that classical records are in the minority. After all, they have to consider the sale of records being a commercial proposition, and if too much high brow music is recorded, and small sales result, their services would not be required by the various gramophone companies who have to cater for the majority. I suppose out of all the violin solos recorded *Dvořák's Humoreske* would outnumber six times the sale of any other violin record.

Still, my reason for writing is to show that things are changing for the better, hence the increase of classical items in the gramophone catalogues; and, further, that success in the sale of classical records means increase in the attendance at classical concerts, since people will want to hear and see the artists in the flesh.

ALBERT SAMMONS.



Review of the First Quarter of 1924

By THE EDITOR

THE first quarter of 1924 will earn whatever fame it has by the quantity and quality of its chamber music. With exceptions I have found it dull for orchestral and vocal music. This is partly my own fault, because I have been working so hard that when I have played the gramophone I have preferred my old favourites to experimenting with the newcomers, and it takes me a very great deal of goodwill to appreciate music that comes easily enough to many people.

Though I should scarcely describe the Ravel septette as epoch-making, unless our quarterly review is to be considered an epoch, I do think that the Columbia Company have a right to be proud of their initiative. Surely the critics have been unfair to the harp? Personally, I have yet to hear the harp as good on any needle-cut record. Ravel is really only possible on a Columbia surface, and I beg them earnestly to reprint the three snippets they have already given us from his ravishing quartet, which on the old surface sounded rather like a ship dropping anchor. Yet even above the sound of the chain rushing through the hawse-pipe one heard fairy-land, a remarkable tribute to M. Ravel when you come to think of it. I get exactly the same pleasure from his music as I still get from Maeterlinck's plays. It is a sugar plum world; but most of my readers must know what it is to have a sudden craving for sugar plums at all costs, and I commend the Ravel septette for the gramophone still-room to assuage such longings. Several of our correspondents have almost literally

waxed indignant over the small allowance of music on each side of the records, and I admit that it is rather like travelling through the county of Huntingdon in a wet winter. But, after all, considering that M. Ravel himself directed the septette and that it is unlikely to have an immense popularity I am prepared to defend the arrangement, particularly as I dislike 10-inch records, which upset one's albums. I am enlarging on this question of short measure, because I do not want the buyers of gramophone records to fall into the habit of buying by avoirdupois, so to speak, which has become the bane of the book world. Gold is more poetically weighed by Troy measure, and we would all sooner have a pound of gold than a pound of lead, even if there are four ounces less of it.

A glorious piece of chamber music from Columbia was the *D minor Sonata* of Brahms. I am inclined to think that in all the sonatas between Mr. Murdoch and Mr. Catterall the violin is allowed to take possession of the performance, so that often it sounds more like a violin solo than it ought. This is partly due to the extremely rich tone of Mr. Catterall, and partly, I should hazard, to the relative positions of the two instruments with regard to the horn. I do hope our readers are supporting the discovery of Brahms by the recording companies. No composer that I know of wears better, and though it takes me quite six performances before I begin to get hold of what is happening, when I once do get hold it would take many more

than sixty to make me let go again. I suppose I shall get into trouble with some of our readers, but I am prepared to defend the judicious snippet, and the forty-seven bars from the *Andante* of the quartet in A minor is, to my mind, just the very snippet that is required to tempt people into exploring Brahms further. This is really enchantingly played by the Lener Quartet, as to my mind is the *Allegretto* from Mozart's quartet in D Minor on the other side. This movement has already been done by the Flonzaley Quartet, but contrary to my usual taste I prefer the Lener version. Before we leave Brahms we have to thank His Master's Voice for giving us a complete quartet at last. I rather feel that there is a gesture of defiance in choosing the *C minor* of Brahms as the first complete quartet; but do not let us decline the challenge of the discobolus, for it is certain that if we buy the four double-sided records of this quartet we shall be offered others more deeply longed for. I do not want to give you the impression that there are too many formidable bars, but you must not expect that it will be as easy to appreciate as an early Beethoven or a Mozart. Personally, I rather suspect that this is a feeler for one of the late Beethoven quartets, and so far as it is possible for anybody to go down on his knees in a paper, I go down on my knees and implore you to bring a late Beethoven quartet within the realms of possibility by securing this Brahms. I may add that in my humble opinion the strength of Mr. Catterall's violin-playing is as much inclined to over-balance the Catterall Quartet as it is to over-balance a sonata played by him and Mr. Murdoch. It seems to me possible to have too much depth of tone. Beware of playing a Catterall quartet with one of the romantic sound-boxes, or you'll get an impression of four passionate violoncellos. They are much better with mica. I did not particularly care for the *Andante* from Mozart's Trio No. 3 in E major (Col.). Not that it isn't charmingly played, but I am already a devoted slave to this trio as arranged by Tertis for the viola instead of the 'cello in the two really beautiful records of the Vocalion Company, which are some of the best chamber music recording ever done. The Vocalion issue of the sixth of Beethoven's early quartets in B flat is the least successful of the London String Quartet's recording. It is also very badly cut. This may be an early recording. I thought at first that my ear might have been spoilt by the luxury of the Columbia chamber music; but on comparing these records with the third of the Beethoven early quartets, issued more than a year ago by the Vocalion Company, I found that the earlier issue was much the better. We had another lovely Lener record, the *Andante Cantabile* from Mozart's G major quartet and on the other side the *Andantino* from the Debussy G minor.

Unfortunately, owing to the dock strike and an attack of vagueness in the London office, Elgar's *In the South* has apparently gone west, and I have not been able to hear it, but everybody in London was enchanted with it. *Brigg Fair* also vanished, and I have not been able to try either its swings or its roundabouts. There, again, I am assured that both records are delightful. The Delius records of *Hassan* I did manage to rescue. I found little less than execrable, and though I am assured that the xylophone in the *Procession of Protracted Death* is impressive in the theatre, it sounds on the gramophone like a schoolboy tapping his pen on the edge of his desk. The *Serenade* is as cheap a piece of music as I ever heard. The music was not nearly so oriental as the composer's treatment of an old English dance tune in the *Dance Rhapsody* issued by Columbia last quarter. Another bad record from His Master's Voice, is the Symphony Orchestra in the ballet music of *Prince Igor*, which recalls the not at all delicious flavour of our grandmothers' records of long ago. That and the *Hassan* record would make one despair of choral effects from the gramophone, if H.M.V. had not shown by their superb *Messiah* choruses that they need not sound like football enthusiasts singing songs in a tunnel on their way back from winning a cup tie. These *Messiah* choruses are really splendid and must not be missed. So, too, is the chorus and re-recording of the *Death of Boris* of H.M.V., though I don't think Chaliapin dies quite so movingly as in the old one. But the best chorus I've ever heard on the gramophone is the Parlophone record of *Senta's Ballade*, and not only is the chorus lovely, but Heckmann-Bettendorf is the best dramatic soprano I've heard for a long time. This record, double-sided 12-inch, costs 4s. 6d. I hope the Germans will pay some of their reparations with a few more similar. I had come to the conclusion that I had been unfair to Lappas when I heard his record of two of the best arias from *Andrea Chénier*, both of which he sings to perfection, and very beautiful arias they are. I don't know why Giordano's opera is not more popular in England, for it is full of melody, and its loveliest soprano aria has not yet been recorded. I commend it to one of our divas. But no sooner had I decided that I had been unfair to Lappas than I heard his rendering of *Ch'ella mi creda libero e lontano* (*Girl of the Golden West*) which, while bearing in mind that there is some excuse for dragging out a song when you are going to be hanged at the end of it, should not even on the brink of eternity be dragged out as this is. On the reverse of this record I saw what at first I took for a bad scratch on a blank surface, but on testing it with a needle I found that it was an almost instantaneous aria from Puccini's *Manon*, very charming while it lasts, as charming as the swift flight past of a

butterfly in spring. The best tenor record of this quarter is Anseu's *J'ai perdu mon Euridice* from *Orphée*. This is certainly one of the first dozen arias in beauty, and I go on repeating it five or six times, enjoying it more each time. Last quarter you had Jeritza's entrancing record from Gluck's *Alceste*. This is worthy to stand beside it, or rather lie on top of it, if you don't want it to get warped. Fleta's record is a failure; a dull song, and half the time the Spanish tenor sounds as if he were gargling. There are two very fine records of Cecil Sherwood. He does something on a Zonophone record which I should have denied to be possible beforehand, in actually making impressive the ludicrous English of *Mamma, quel vino è generoso*. Every syllable is distinguishable at the first hearing. In spite of having to sing the impossible word mother about twenty times he really moves one by the way he sings it. The musical critic in the *Weekly Despatch* wrote some weeks ago that English singers who were trained in Italy were put off singing in English by the Italians, who consider English an impossible language for singing. This is a bad observation. The only English singers whose words we ever distinguish are those trained in Italy. A typical England trained tenor is Tudor Davies, with whom you distinguish one word in ten. Everybody who still enjoys *Cavalleria Rusticana* is advised to buy this record of Cecil Sherwood. Actuelle has also issued an excellent double-sided record of those moss-grown favourites—literally "favoris"—*Che gelida manina* and *Vesti la giubba* in which Sherwood sings in Italian. I have not space to mention in detail all the singers of this quarter, but Leila Megane's record of *Land of Hope and Glory* and Goring Thomas's *Summer Night* with 'cello obbligato by Cedric Sharp should be tried. So should the Vocalion record of Tokatyan singing *Tarantella Sincera*. Nor on any account must the Brunswick record of Claire Dux singing Schubert's *Hedge Roses* and Gluck's *The Broken Ring*, nor Marie Tiffany and a male trio singing two old negro songs be missed. These are both exquisite. Brunswick have given us another beautifully played Hofmann piano record, the *Hungarian Rhapsody* complete, the instrument in which, according to the experts in the London office, is out of tune. I should be glad to hear from any correspondent who can confirm this. The piano record that gave me as intense pleasure as I've had from any piano record on the gramophone was Harold Samuel's Bach record. The H.M.V. recording of the piano is better suited to Bach than any other composer. Lovers of Bach will not need any exhortation from me, but I gather from the remarks of various correspondents that Bach is not yet universally appreciated, and I commend to the unconverted the *Chromatic Fantasia*. There is a charming Una Bourne record of a *Smetana Polka* and a *Granados* piece.

The only really big orchestral work we have had this quarter has been Dvořák's *New World Symphony* published by Columbia in five parts in an album. This is not a work that I care to hear very often, and in testing it against the H.M.V. version in four parts I have reached the point of never wanting to hear it again so long as I live. One of the reasons why the rest of my quarterly review is rather sketchy is the amount of trouble I took in playing these rival productions with every kind of needle and sound-box against each other, at the end of which I gave a decided vote in favour of the Columbia version. The H.M.V. *Andante* is full of hoots, and right through the wood wind is much better managed on the Columbia. Perhaps the brass on the H.M.V. was better, but Columbia both with the timpani and the whole interpretation was less pompous and generally more attractive. I have forgotten to mention that we have had two more *Planets*. The opening of *Mars* reminds one of the opening of *Tod und Verklärung*. I might get fond of *Saturn* by the time he has brought me old age. I shall say no more about either for the moment, but when we get *Mercury* and *Neptune* I shall have a little sermon to preach on the complete text.

Best Vocal Records of the quarter:—(a) *Senta's Ballade* from *The Flying Dutchman* (Wagner), sung by Emmy Heckmann-Bettendorf and chorus (Parlophone E10080, 4s. 6d.); (b) *J'ai perdu mon Euridice* from *Orphée* (Gluck), sung by Fernand Anseu (H.M.V. 2-032069, 7s. 6d.); (c) *Hedge Roses* (Schubert) and *The Broken Ring* (Gluck), sung by Claire Dux (Brunswick 15061, 5s. 6d.).

Best Chamber Music of the quarter:—(a) *Quartet in C minor, Op. 51* (Brahms), the Catterall Quartet (H.M.V., D791, 792, 793, 794, 26s.); (b) *Ravel Septette*, Miss G. Maso (harp) with accompaniment for string quartet, flute and clarinet (Col. L1518, 1519, 15s.); (c) *Sonata in D minor* (Brahms), Catterall and Murdoch (Col. L1535, 1536, 1537, 22s. 6d.).

Best Violin Solo of the quarter:—*Capriccio Valse* and *Romance* (Wieniawski), played by Huberman (Brunswick 50031, 8s.).

Best Light Music of the last six months:—*I've got the Yes! We Have no Bananas Blues*, sung by Belle Baker, and *My Sweetie Went Away*, sung by Murray and Smalle (H.M.V. B1720, 3s.).

I have been enormously impressed by my first experience with the Edison instrument and the Edison re-creations. On several occasions I have alluded to the difficulty of testing in London, but I did not require the solitude of Jethou to make up my mind immediately that here was something quite different in gramophones. My admiration is all the more remarkable because most of the music on the re-creations is piffle, or if not piffle, trite to a degree. The first thing that got me was the piano

record by Ferdinand Himmelreich, *Oh, Tell me if all those Enduring Young Charms*, or, as I prefer to call it, *My Lodging is on the Cold Ground* (I don't see why Tom Moore should have the credit of the melody), and I have never heard any piano record to touch it for realism. I then tried Claudia Muzio in a couple of arias, and I could not believe it was the same voice I had heard attributed to her on other records. A harp record was astonishing. As for the jazz bands, all the jazz bands I have heard on the gramophone sound like tin kettles by comparison, but what "an expense of spirit in a waste of shame!" as Shakespeare says. I read right through the catalogue of the re-creations and apart from one or two hacks of the recording room I did not find a single record of good music. I feel inclined to say as a British gramophone enthusiast to an American gramophone company in the words of one of their own fox-trots, "You may be fast, but your mamma's gonna slow you down." In other words, there is no future for Edison instruments unless we get good music in addition to well-recorded music. To the recording and reproduction and the amount of music (one-third as much again) on each side of the records no unprejudiced person could give anything but unqualified praise. I should mention, however, that the fly in the ointment in this case is the buzz in the wax, for the scratch, hiss, roar, escape of bath water, rainstorm, call it what you will, is worse than on any other record. I found, however, that by listening in the next room with the door open the scratch was reduced to no more than the H.M.V. scratch, while the quality of the music was thereby greatly improved and the volume in no way diminished. I am pretty hard bitten now in the way of gramophone improvements, but the jazz bands of the Edison, for out of the records sent us this month more than half are jazz, have amazed me.

Since writing the above I learn that an instrument is arriving from America. This will go to Jethou, and some time in the summer you shall have the result in a special article.

About a couple of months ago the Jewel Phono Parts Company, of Chicago, sent me a very attractive portable instrument. The sound-box is the famous Nom-Y-Ka, of whose merits several correspondents have written. The tone is of a mellow, romantic type, which all portables ought to have. They seem somehow to require more body in the sound-box. I have never heard the piano make a more pleasant noise on the gramophone. I don't say that it is a realistic reproduction of the piano, because it is not; but it makes even the worst piano record quite tolerable simply quâ noise, and the way the sound emerges horizontally adds to the illusion that an elfin piano is being played. The sound-box is not quite so good with orchestras and,

as one expects with a romantic sound-box, apt to blur the definition. There are many people, of course, who prefer these blurred orchestral renderings. I suspect our friend Captain Barnett does. Yes, I have found the Jewel Phono parts an extraordinarily convenient little instrument. It will not only play needle-cut records, but it will also play extremely well the Pathé records, and we are apt to forget what a number of excellent Pathé records there are. Some of the Pathé bands have rarely been equalled, certainly never surpassed, and I have a portion of the fourth Beethoven by the Rosé Quartet which makes me regret that there are not many more of them. The sound-box will also play the Edison re-creations, but I did not have an opportunity while at Jethou of testing these upon it. It is a very easy motor to wind, and it is very easy to put on the records. It is just the kind of instrument for an invalid. By using fibre needles, for which the sound-box is cut, you can get an extraordinarily pleasant sound both with the human voice and every other kind of record. The makers recommend Petmecky needles and medium H.M.V.'s, and for the Pathé records and Edison re-creations they send special needles of two strengths, one all bone, softer, and one with a half metal shank, considerably louder. It is certainly the best equipped small instrument I have ever seen. It travelled direct from Chicago to my little island, and the makers had omitted nothing to show off their instrument to its best advantage. An album (ten records) can be carried in the lid, and in this album were even included two American records, one a Vocalion of brown wax. All kinds of needles were sent and the necessary spanners to take the instrument to pieces when necessary. I believe that the Murdoch and Murdoch Co., of Oxford Street, are going to have the instrument on view, and I strongly recommend any reader who wants a compendious portable to have a look at it. I have grown very fond of mine.

Another instrument that I have been enjoying lately is the Beltona Peridulce. I don't see much object in saying all over again what I've already said to Captain Barnett:

February 1st, 1924.

DEAR CAPTAIN BARNETT,—I shall be taking an opportunity to give my opinion of the Beltona Peridulce in an early number of THE GRAMOPHONE; but I thought that perhaps you might care to have a letter from me for inclusion in your second and revised edition of *Gramophone Tips*.

I have now had the Peridulce in daily action for well over two months, so that my opinion is no mere hasty first impression. I have not yet heard any instrument that places the music so well. The way in which it throws the human voice forward is exactly what every singer hopes to do with his own voice. When you come to think of it, the faults of many gramophones are the faults we criticise in a bad singer. Nor is this effect achieved illegitimately

by singing too much from the head. If I had been christening the instrument myself, instead of calling it the Beltona Peridulce, I should have called it the Beltona Bel Canto. The same qualities that make it so good for the human voice make it good for solo instruments and chamber music. It is, of course, least successful with orchestras, but, on the other hand, what gramophone is not? Another thing I like about the Peridulce is its exceptional adaptability. I have no hesitation in saying that no instrument at present on the market is as serviceable for showing off the faults and virtues of the various sound-boxes that are becoming as numerous as the birds of the air. And now for your own sound-box. Well, there is no question of its sweetness. With the Sympathetic Chromic and Euphonic needles well adjusted it will make the harshest record—I won't say what make—not merely tolerable, but enjoyable. Whether this feat is one of which to be proud or ashamed I leave to your conscience. Personally I disapprove strongly of these euphemistic sound-boxes, and I think that any record that manages to survive by their help should be broken up like an old biscuit. Such sound-boxes are the hashish and opium of the gramophone world. I imagine that Coleridge waking from an opium dream in these days to get Kubla Khan on paper might have written:—

A damsel with a Peridulce
In a vision once I saw :
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her Peridulce she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.

But the fact that I distrust your sound-box and fear to use it on your instrument does not make it less probable that hundreds of enthusiasts more romantic than myself will get greater pleasure from it than from any they have hitherto used. But for me your real achievement remains your placing of the music, and the convenience and swiftness with which I can remove your own sound-box and replace it with one that will not make me too uncritical a critic.—Yours most faithfully, COMPTON MACKENZIE.

You will notice what I say to him about his conscience and that sound-box of his. All realists of the gramophone will hate it. I dislike it myself, but if any amateur of sound-boxes is looking for a convenient instrument on which to try them all, he won't find any instrument more convenient than this. The telescopic tone arm always allows him to have his needle alignment correct, and as I say in the letter, the placing of the sound really is very remarkable. There are a quantity of other topics on which I might enlarge this month, but they will have to wait.

One of our most valued correspondents recently called my attention to the Columbia records of Eugenie Bronskaja. I am most grateful to him for the tip and to the Columbia Company for very kindly sending me a selection of them to Jethou. No enthusiast can consider his galaxy of sopranos a representative twinkling unless it includes a Bronskaja record, and I venture to think that when he shall have acquired one he will go on acquiring the all too few others. It is late in the day to be trying to describe this lovely voice. I prefer to let it sing

for itself, so to speak, and to be content with recommending A.5193 as the first record to buy. On one side the lucky owner will have a rendering of *Caro Nome* that he will be able to match against any of them and lay odds on its being voted the pick of the catalogues. On the other side he will have Gounod's *Ave Maria* sung radiantly. The adverb looks rather affected in print, but you will know what I am trying to express. The diva has also sung some fine duets, and collectors will notice a rare duet from *Traviata* in A.5181. Constantino, the tenor, is not quite so good as Bonci in the same style, but it's an excellent record. *Parigi, o cara*, is on the other side, which is well done but not to my mind up to the classic record of this, sung by McCormack and Bori.

One correspondent wrote and asked when I was going to get on with my autobiography. I promise the May number shall contain an instalment. Meanwhile this month we have Mr. Lloyd Osbourne's. One of the most moving things I have read in recent literature is Mr. Lloyd Osbourne's account of how his stepfather, Robert Louis Stevenson, used to pick out for himself on a flageolet scraps of music and how he wished that R.L.S. could have had the joy of a gramophone or a player-piano in Samoa. Stevenson himself wrote, somewhere, that there were only two reasons for being rich. One was to have a yacht and the other a string quartet. I do not know how Sir Sidney Colvin and Mr. Gosse would have liked sending him out records instead of books and receiving despairing appeals to know where they were. I am sure my friend Mr. Gosse would not have liked it, for he hates music, and when I told him last autumn that I had started a gramophone review he looked at me with puzzled compassion. Mr. Lloyd Osbourne says that his stepfather was really starved of music. When I think of the pleasure the gramophone has given to people all over the world I grow a little impatient of remarks such as this from Mr. Ramsay MacDonald:—

There is too much over-indulgence in recreation to-day—an incapacity to spend a quiet Sunday. I am amazed that there should be so many people who can do nothing but be amused and entertained by a gramophone, and who have no capacity to spend time profitably with themselves.

To be sure, we know the kind of gramophone he meant and the kind of music that was being listened to, but I can never help feeling a little annoyed by remarks like these, which are rather like the stale old jokes about mothers-in-law and spring poets. My revenge for them is always to convert another person to the gramophone. I go to my club, fix on somebody, lure him round to Newman Street, and when he leaves me the light of faith is shining in his eyes, and I know that before a week is out his bank balance will be considerably lower. I have not yet succeeded in converting a bishop, but I am looking out now for a suitable one. COMPTON MACKENZIE.

TRANSLATIONS



THE JEWEL SONG FROM FAUST

From Act III., where Marguerite, after singing the beautiful folk-song *Le Roi de Thulé*, finds the casket of jewels, and decking herself in them bursts into this brilliant coloratura air—a wonderful contrast for the singer to achieve.

Recorded by Melba, Patti, Sembrich, Farrar, César, and Violet Essex (in English) for H.M.V.; Stralia (in Italian), Boninsegna (in Italian), Cavaleri and Finzi-Magrini for Columbia; Destournel for Vocalion; and others.

Air des Bijoux.

Recitative.

O Dieu ! que de bijoux !
O God ! What jewels !

Est ce un rêve charmant qui m'éblouit ?
Is it a charming dream which dazzles me ?

Ou si je veille,
Or if I awake,

Mes yeux n'ont jamais vu de richesse pareille !
My eyes have never seen such richness !

Si j'osais seulement me parer un moment des ces
If I only dared to deck myself for a moment with these

Pendants d'oreille !
Ear-rings !

Ah ! voici justement au fond de la cassette un miroir !
Ah ! see, right at the bottom of the casket a mirror !

Comment n'être pas coquette ?
How can I escape from coquetry ?

Air.

Ah ! je ris de me voir
Ah ! I laugh to see myself

Si belle en ce miroir !
So beautiful in this mirror !

Est ce toi, Marguerite !
Is it you, Marguerite !

Est ce toi ? Réponds moi.
Is it you ? Answer me.

Réponds, réponds vite !
Answer, answer quick !

Non, ce n'est plus toi ;
No, it is no longer you ;

Non, ce n'est plus ton visage ;
No, it is no longer your face ;

C'est la fille d'un roi !
It is a king's daughter !

Ce n'est plus toi !
It is no longer you !

C'est la fille d'un roi,
It is a king's daughter,

Qu'on salue au passage !
Whom they greet in passing !

Ah ! s'il était ici !
Ah ! if he were here !

S'il me voyait ainsi !
If he saw me like this !

Comme une demoiselle
Like a lady

Il me trouverait belle !
He would find me beautiful !

Ah, ah !
Ah, ah !

Achevons la métamorphose !
Let's make the transformation !

Il me tarde encor d'essayer
There's no time to try on

Le bracelet et le collier !
The bracelet and the necklace !

Dieu ! c'est comme une main
God ! It is like a hand

Qui sur mon bras se pose.
Laid upon my arm.

Ah ! je ris de me voir, etc.
Ah ! I laugh when I see myself, etc.

SPIRTO GENTIL

From Act IV. of *La Favorita* (Donizetti), first produced at Paris in 1840. It was originally composed by Donizetti for an opera called *Il Duca D'Alba*, never produced till 1882, and was transferred by him to *La Favorita*. Fernando sings it in the courtyard of the monastery to which he has returned in the belief that Leonora has deceived him.

Recorded by Caruso, Gigli, Evan Williams (in English), Tudor Davies (in English), Campagnola (in French), and Marcella (in French), for H.M.V.; Bonci, Constantino, Lazaro and McCormack for Columbia; Luigi Cilla for Imperial de Luxe; Lenghi-Cellini for Parlophone; Ciccolini for Edison; and others.

The English words are a literal translation of the Italian, not of the French, contributed by A. W. H. Waterhouse.

Spirto gentil, ne'sogni miei,
Ange si pur que dans un songe,
Gentle spirit, in my dreams,

Brillasti un di, ma ti perdei,
J'ai cru trouver vous, que jamais.
Thou once didst shine, but I lost thee :

Fuggi dal cor—mentita speme—
Avec l'espoir triste mensonge
Thou fledst from my heart—delusive hope—

Larve d'amor. Larve d'amor.
En volez vous ! et pour jamais
Phantoms of love, phantoms of love
Fuggite insieme ! Larve d'amor !
En volez vous ! et pour jamais.
Fly together ! Phantoms of love !

A te d'accanto del genitore scordava
En moi par l'amour d'une femme
Besides thee I forgot my parents,

Il pianto la patria il ciel, donna sleal,
De Dieu l'amour avait faibli.
Tears, my country, heaven, false woman.

In tanto amore segnasti il core
Pitié ! je t'ai rendu mon âme
In such love my heart was marked
D'onta mortal ahimè ! ahimè !
Pitié ! Seigneur rends moi l'oubli ! Pitié ! Pitié !
With mortal shame, alas, alas ! etc.

Spirto gentil ne'sogni miei,
Ange si pur que dans un songe

Brillasti un di, ma ti perdei—
J'ai cru trouver vous que jamais

Fuggi dal cor mentita speme,
Avec l'espoir triste mensonge

Larve d'amor, larve d'amor,
En volez vous ! et pour jamais

Fuggite insieme, larve d'amor
En volez vous ! en volez vous

Fuggite insieme, larve d'amor
Et pour jamais, en volez vous

CHE GELIDA MANINO

From Act I of Puccini's *La Bohème* (1896). In the moonlit garret of the Latin Quarter the draught has blown out Rudolfo's candle, as well as that of Mimi, his strange visitor. She has dropped the key of her room on the floor, and when Rudolfo finds it he slips it into his pocket and goes on hunting for it till his hand touches Mimi's, and he sings this famous aria which is followed by "Sì, mi chiamano Mimi."

Among the tenors who have recorded it are Caruso, Martinelli, McCormack, Yadvovker, Mario Chamlee, Ciccolini, Orville Harrold, Rosing, Bonci, Constantino, Bendinelli, Tom Burke, Hislop, Lazaro, Smirnoff, Charles Hackett, Tito Schipa, and Lenghi-Cellini, in Italian; Evan Williams, Maurice D'Oisly, Tudor Davies, and John Perry, in English; Campagnola and Marcelin in French; and Robert Hutt, Otto Marak, and Slezak in German.

Che gelida manino !

What a frozen little hand !

Me la lasci riscaldar.

Let me warm it.

Cercar che giova ?

May I help to look ?

Al buio non si trova

In the dark it cannot be found

Ma per fortuna

But luckily

E una notte di luna,

It is a moonlight night,

E qui la luna

And here we have

L'abbiamo vicina.

The moon quite near us.

Aspetti, signorina,

Wait, signorina,

Le dirò con due parole

I will tell you in two words

Chi son, e che faccio

Who I am, and what I do

E come vivo. Vuole ?

And how I live. Shall I ?

Chi son ? Sono un poeta.

Who am I ? I am a poet.

Che cosa faccio ? Scrivo.

What do I do ? I write.

E come vivo ? Vivo !

And how do I live ? I just live !

In povertà mia lieta

In my cheerful poverty

Scialo da gran signore

I dispense in the grand manner

Rime ed inni d'amore.

Verses and hymns of love.

Per sogni e per chimere

By means of dreams and visions

E per castelli in aria,

And of castles in the air

L'anima ho milionaria.

I have the outlook of a millionaire.

Talor dal mio forziere

Sometimes from my treasury

Rubano tutti i gioielli

Are stolen all the jewels

Due ladri : gli occhi belli,

By two thieves, two lovely eyes !

V'entrar con voi pur ora,

They have entered here now with you

Ed i miei sogni usati,

And my weary dreams,

Ed i bei sogni miei,

And my beautiful dreams

Tosto si dileguar !

Quickly melt away !

Ma il furto non m'accora

But the theft has not befallen me,

Poichè v'ha preso stanza

Since sweet hope has

La dolce speranza ! . . .

Taken up its abode there ! . . .

Or che mi conoscete,

Now that you know about me,

Parlate voi.

Speak—

Deh ! parlate : chi siete ?

Oh ! speak : who are you ?

Vi piaccia dir !

I pray you, tell !

DEH! VIENI, NON TARDAR

The graceful aria from Act IV. of *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Mozart), first produced at Vienna in 1796. It is sung by Susanna, in the artificially complicated scene in the garden where, disguised as the Countess, her mistress, she inflames the jealousy of Figaro by singing in mock rapture to an imaginary lover.

It is recorded by Lucrezia Bori, Selma Kurz, Graziella Pareto, Marcella Sembrich, and Violet Essex (in English), H.M.V.; by Maria Barrientos, Columbia; by Kathleen Destournel, Vocalion; by Marie Tiffany (Edison); and others.

Recitativo.

Giunse alfin il momento

At last the moment has arrived

Che godrò senza affanno

Which I may enjoy without dismay

In braccio all'idol mio !

In the arms of my idol !

Timide cure ! uscite dal mio petto !

Fearful cares, away from my breast !

A turbar non venite il mio diletto !

Come not to disturb my delight !

O come par che all'amoroso foco

Oh, how fitting to my flame of love is

L'amenità del loco—

The charm of this spot—

La terra, e il ciel risponde !

The earth and the heaven respond !

Come la notte i furti miei seconda !

How the night assists my secrecy !

Aria.

Deh vieni, non tardar, o gioia bella !

Ah come, do not linger, O lovely joy !

Vieni ove amore per goder t'appella :

Come where love calls thee to enjoyment :

Finchè non splenda in ciel notturna face,

While the torch of night shines not in the heavens,

Finchè l'aria è ancor bruna, e il mondo tace.

While the air is still dusky and the world is silent.

Qui mormora il ruscel, qui scherza l'aura,

Here murmurs the streamlet, here plays the breeze

Che col dolce susurro il cor ristaura,

That with soft whisper revives the heart,

Qui ridon i fioretti e l'erba è fresca,

Here smile the flowerets and the grass is fresh,

Ai piaceri d'amor qui tutto adessa.

To the delights of love here everything allures.

Vieni, ben mio, tra queste piante ascose !

Come, my dear one, among these hidden bushes !

Vieni ! ti vo' la fronte incoronar di rose !

Come ! I would crown thy brow with roses !

A CONFESSION

By LLOYD OSBOURNE

[To our Player-Piano readers, whom we are obliged to disappoint this month, so far as a separate Supplement is concerned, we offer this charming palinode as a consolation, and trust that it will convince them, as well as all gramophonists, that both player-piano and gramophone are necessary for the full enjoyment of recorded music.—Ed.]

YES, this is a confession. Like a poor sinner snatched from perdition by the Salvation Army, I stand up in your midst, dear brothers and sisters, abashed and repentant. Bang the big drum, rattle the tambourines, shout out the glad Hallelujahs. Yes, I was once a Man who Hated Good Music! I avow it before you all; I avow it, flushing to the ears. Poor heathen that I was I thought it mostly Noise—noise that you paid for in a world where so much of it could be had for nothing. I loathed Wagner; would have run a mile to escape a concert; the word “music” in the corner of an invitation could not have appeared more cheerless to me than if it had been “no refreshments.”

Looking back I can perceive that my whole change of heart must be ascribed to my first gramophone. I innocently bought it to play dance-music, never dreaming whither it was going to lead me. And it played dance-music extraordinarily well; so well, that when I went to other people's parties and had to dance to what was called “real music” I often mourned for my dear old box at home. The dear old box was never late in keeping appointments; its time was always perfect, which was often much more than could be said of “real music”; it never needed any supper, nor insisted on catching a suburban train at midnight.

Then by degrees I was awakened to an interest in operatic songs, inspired by the novelty, as it then was, of hearing Caruso, Scotti, etc., at home. I grew very fond of these records, and they gradually bridged my path towards more serious music. They were tuneful; their orchestral accompaniments were simple; I was lured on and on until I began to wish to hear the real singers instead of their vulcanite ghosts. I believe *Boris Godounov* was the first opera I ever really enjoyed, and this was due in no small measure to my previous familiarity with the records. And this led to one of the greatest pleasures of the gramophone—when the song began to recall the actual singer and one's memory cloaked the mechanical deficiencies of the instrument.

Little by little some of the great violinists began to creep into my modest collection, and with them I began to get a dawning sense of orchestration. Instinctively I was passing from the one-syllable

stage of music—the C-A-T, cat, D-O-G, dog, stage—and was finding pleasure in longer words, so to speak. Then to my wonder I began to enjoy symphonies—the dwarfed and minimised symphonies of the gramophone, but which are, none the less, enormously educational. Urged by my wife, and with much misgiving, I went to a few concerts, and it was with surprise I found myself enjoying them. The gramophone had been teaching me, little though I knew it, and was giving me the key of a hitherto unknown world. I who so short a time before would have been bored now found an indescribable stir, an indescribable elation in hearing a great symphony finely played.

The climax was Wagnerian opera. To discover Wagner is a sort of epoch in one's life. One is borne away in a swirl of emotion; tossed hither and thither in a wild surf, conscious only of an intensity of feeling so nameless and sublime that it is beyond all power of words to describe. To most of us music seems to find its supreme expression in *Tristan und Isolde*. It is the culminating masterpiece. Yet it would have remained a sealed book to me, a mere name and nothing more, had it not been for a musical education I was receiving without in the least being aware of it.

Possibly I should have lost any further interest in mechanical music had not a lady at this juncture moved into the flat below mine. She was a pale, venomous young woman with untidy blonde hair, and I learned with dismay that she was a professional pianist. She began practising every morning after breakfast, and drove me distracted as I attempted to go on with my literary work. When I remonstrated she flew into a frightful passion; her shrill fury roused the whole house; she was small and slight and apparently dying of consumption, but her powers of vituperation were beyond anything I have ever heard. Finally, through the landlord a sort of treaty of peace was patched up between us. She agreed to remain quiescent till noon if I would concede the whole afternoon and evening. It was a harsh bargain, but what else could I do? And to make it more exasperating for me she usually began to play at a quarter before twelve, thus involving us in more violent scenes about our respective clocks.

Now the curious thing was that although the piano

was an unendurable infliction, *I liked its tone*. It seemed to me the most beautiful piano I had ever heard, and I learned from its pale and venomous owner, in one of our least bitter interviews, that it was called a Steinway. Even when I was ready to tear my hair with rage, I would say to myself: "If I ever buy a piano it shall certainly be a Steinway."

I knew so little of pianos that it seemed like an extraordinary coincidence when I read of the Aeolian Company putting out a Steinway pianola. *Steinway*, why that was the name I had so carefully treasured lest I should forget it! I went to hear a "demonstration" and was delighted—though the price seemed fearful. In despair I tried all the other piano-players on the market; some of them were excellent and all were cheaper, but the Steinway still remained my choice. Finally I nerved myself to the point of buying one.

Never shall I forget its arrival on a winter's night, coming through the window with snow on its wrappings amid jingling of tackles and bellowing of orders as though it were a cannon being hoisted into a fort. Elephantine men roared from below, roared from my roof, roared from the embrasure of my dismantled window. The words "Gently now," "Ease her or fablet" reverberated in stentorian tones. Then what unwrapping, what tipping, what bliss as the kindly giants took their leave! We were alone at last, my wife and I, with our shining acquisition—and it was with almost trembling fingers that we put in our first record.

In the innocence of our hearts we expected to get the same results as we had heard at the "demonstration," not realising how much skill is needed to play such an instrument well. It had seemed so easy to the practised man who had played for us; to all appearance he had simply inserted a record and pumped, though we remembered afterwards that he had shown extreme reluctance to play anything except the records lying on his table. Of course he had made an elaborate study of them—but that only dawned on us afterwards. We, poor simpletons, simply pumped and pumped, and the effect was terribly disheartening. We could scarcely believe it was the same pianola. We had stipulated, you must know, for the identical one that had been played to us. Had a wretched and unworthy substitute been foisted off on us? Yet it was the same. Look at that thumb-mark! Look at that scratch which had troubled us a little! The same, yes, but somehow entirely different; the body the same but the soul fled. Was it for this we had engaged to pay instalments over years and years! For this strident and mechanical barrel-organ that mocked all our hopes and shattered all our eager anticipations! We went to bed thoroughly disillusioned.

It was all of a month before we got any real pleasure out of it. The truth is that it is really

difficult to play a pianola well; some people, indeed, never learn at all, while others can get results from a mediocre instrument that will put a really fine one to shame—in the hands of an indifferent player. Interpretation is everything, and the actual mechanical rendition is so little absolute that it is susceptible of extraordinary refinements of tone and phrasing. Professional pianists will smile at the word "feeling" used in this connection; but nevertheless there is such a thing, and it is a gift by no means accorded everyone.

My first pianola is now nearly twelve years old; my first gramophone is fourteen; and both lead a busy and a very hard life in my home in the mountains of California. They seem as good to-day as ever they were. Indeed, such instruments may almost be regarded as investments for life, and I think this should be borne in mind by prospective purchasers. Buy the very best instrument you can afford, whether it be a gramophone or a pianola, and in respect to the latter it is essential to get one with a full keyboard. The 65-note player is hardly worth possessing; all the music for it has to be re-written and curtailed.

Recently I bought a Steinway baby-grand for my flat in London, where I expect to spend the next four winters and felt the need of such consolation for dark and dismal days. This Steinway has given me my first introduction to "duo-art" records in which the playing of great pianists is perpetuated with an almost incredible fidelity. To be able to call in at will Paderewski, Bauer, Hofmann, Grainger, Godowsky, etc., is a thing to stagger the imagination. I have not grown used to it yet, and I doubt if I ever will; there is a separate miracle in every one of those long narrow boxes. If only the Aeolian Company would give us better paper—paper that does not occasionally rustle—I should feel that the climax of mechanical music had been reached. American records never rustle. Why should the English?

The other day an eminent musical authority spoke of the "amazing improvement of the public's taste in music in the last twenty years," and seemed at a loss how to explain it. Like Topsy, he appeared to think it had "just growed." But surely the answer is in these mechanical instruments that are everywhere incessantly training people to appreciate good music? In my own case I have no doubt whatever; I owe all of mine to the gramophone.

LLOYD OSBOURNE.



REVIEWS of new Animatic, Artistyle, Duo-Art, and Welte rolls are held over, but any player-pianist reader who wishes for information should communicate with the Editor.

ON FIBRE NEEDLES

By R. GOODCHILD

CAPTAIN BARNETT in the November issue of THE GRAMOPHONE gave us his views upon needles in general. I am a confirmed user of fibre needles and propose to give a few hints on their use, since, judging from Captain Barnett's somewhat disparaging remarks, his experience in this connection has been unfortunate.

At the outset let it be said that this form of needle is by no means "obsolete." There are now quite a number of brands offering and various forms of cutters are available.

Firstly, have your sound-box cut with the triangular needle hole. Adaptors do *not* give the best results. You will find that the confirmed fibreite never uses them. When having your stylus cut with the triangular socket see that this is cut deeply. You can then get the needle well home and will be able to get a shortened effect with a full length needle. Some boxes are sold with a shallow cut and it would be an advantage in this case to have the cut deepened. This is not essential but facilitates use with merely a small portion of the needle protruding from the socket.

Except with exceptionally loud records full length needles are not satisfactory. For records of a quiet nature and many of average volume a projection of about one quarter of an inch will suffice. If the needle be too much shortened the point may break up before the termination of the record. Generally speaking the needle should be as short as is consistent with its "holding up" properly.

This brings us to the question of needles themselves. The best needles are those treated with oil and hardened off. Of this class H.M.V. needles are good, but so far I have not come across anything to beat the "Hall" brand, formerly known as "B. & H." There are, however, too many needles on the market of which the cane has not been subject to any such process. These hail principally from Japan, are lighter in colour and frequently have the "shell" on the left instead of the right of the needle. They are less satisfactory and should be avoided.

In any packet of needles you will in all probability come across one or two specimens badly shaped, unusually thin, or with a more or less serrated edge. It will be advisable to discard these straight away.

A cutter is, of course, a *sine qua non* and as with needles so with cutters, some are better than others. If you use the scissor pattern now sold by both Columbia and H.M.V. you will not be far wrong. I do not agree with Captain Barnett that

fibres fail on the high notes and overtones. In this connection, however, it is very important to keep the cutter *sharp* as the success or non-success of the needle depends on getting a fine, clean point. If your reproduction shows signs of deteriorating do not necessarily blame the sound-box or the needle. Look to the cutter and if required have the blade re-sharpened. Neither should the scissor arms work too loosely. Remember also that you can always renew your cutters for the price of a single celebrity record.

If you do not jib at a little trouble it is beneficial to use, in the first instance, a preparation like Glissoline on your records. This gives a good polish and helps the record to settle down to fibres without "training," and need only be done once. The fibres themselves should maintain the condition once established. As with other needles, it is a good plan to give your records a polish over with a cleaning pad or soft duster from time to time.

Occasionally boxes appear on the market with the stylus cut for fibres on the "skew." This is not satisfactory and it is a matter for some surprise that the new Columbia box should be cut in this fashion. The method appears to me to have the following disadvantages:—

- (a) More surface noise.
- (b) Defective contact.
- (c) Needle does not bear up well.
- (d) Wear concentrated on one side of groove.

I have reason to believe that the makers realise that there is some truth in this criticism and that the question is under reconsideration.

Most of the arguments I have heard against fibres seem to boil down to two points:—

- (a) Trouble involved.
- (b) Loss of volume.

Fibre needles are not fool-proof and it must be admitted that their manipulation is not quite so simple as in the case of their steel brethren. Nevertheless there is nothing complicated about them, a little patience in becoming acquainted with them is all that is required.

If you desire above all, volume, then fibres will not meet your requirements. But if your aim be to obtain pure music, then I hold that they are at present unsurpassed. You reduce surface noise to a minimum, only the very finest pointed steel needles approach them in this respect. "Blast" and "chatter" are much less frequent. Fibre appears to act as a filter and outside noises are held in check.

I have preached the fibre gospel for some years now and I find that it is the really musical people, those to whom the gramophone is merely a means to an end, who once converted remain numbered among fibre's strongest supporters.

Loss of volume may in some measure be recovered by the use of Daws Clarke's needle tension attachment. To those not wholly satisfied with the volume obtained from fibres I strongly recommend this simple, inexpensive and effective little device.

Complaints are sometimes made that fibres fail to last out robust records. This is usually due to one or other of the following causes:—

- (a) Poor needles.
- (b) Imperfect points due to dull cutters.
- (c) An excessively heavy sound-box.
- (d) The use of too short a needle for the particular record.

An obstinate record should not be played with a short needle until successfully broken in. To this end a liberal application of Glissoline is helpful. Very infrequently a really recalcitrant example may be met with, but such are few and far between.

Finally there is the question of wear, and I unhesitatingly state that so far as fibre is concerned, practically there is none. I have several hundred records and my gramophone is in almost constant use. Since I have used fibres I have never replaced a record on account of wear, indeed I fail to detect even a single sign of it. One hears of fine steel needles claimed not to wear the record, but I remain sceptical. We have all heard of, and probably possessed, individual records that have been played numberless times with steel needles yet remain as good as new. Do we not also know the other kind that go off on a high note or a strong passage after only a few playings? The very fine steel needles do not fit the groove comfortably, but run more or less on the bottom. Consequently there is a tendency to "chatter," a phenomenon which is itself productive of those tell-tale grey lines.

I take it that the bamboo from which fibre needles are manufactured is a softer substance than the playing surface of the record. On the other hand, the converse is true as regards steel (and other metal) needles, and thereby hangs a tale.

Note.—Hall needles and tension device may be obtained from Messrs. Daws Clarke & Co., 23, The Avenue, W.4.



SOME TECHNICAL NOTES

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

[N.B.—This letter was held over from last month's issue.—ED.]

DEAR SIR,—Persistent advocacy for purity of design in gramophones has brought me many letters. The majority are in appreciation, but quite a few are enquiries I cannot deal with fully in a postal reply. The expressed difficulties of the few may be the unexpressed thoughts of many, so I will try to clear the view in reference to each step I have taken toward my present standpoint.

To begin with the angle at which the needle is used. It is five years since I changed over for good and all from 60° to 45°. Elementary theory would seem to point to 60° as the better angle for definition, and it was with some reluctance that I made experiments at the kinder angle. It was not until I came to regard surface noise as a thing that might eventually be got rid of, and it was not until I began to find how rapidly my celebrity records were going to the dogs that I determined to alter my sound-box and shift my motor forward in order to give the 45° angle a fair trial, even if that should result in definition less clean than I had become accustomed to. To my delight, I found definition was if anything, better than it had been, surface

noise was greatly diminished and my expensive records were destroyed less rapidly. Then I bought a strong magnifying glass and *looked* at a record, and my theory suddenly became modernized to accord with practice.

About needles. The first thing I noticed in reference to these was that a curved-sided point scratched a record less than a straight-sided point. Probably everyone who has made even cursory experiments on the subject has noticed that fact. The former seemed to act to some extent as a burnisher, and the latter more as an icepick. I had no opportunity of observing experimentally the importance of the hardness and the *toughness* of the steel until I bought my first packet of "sympathetic" needles, for the curved-sided point at one end of each of these was the first thing of the kind in really hard tough steel that I had tried out fully.

Many people are surprised that the very sharp hard point of a fine needle will wear a record so little, they think that the harder the steel is the worse it should treat the record. If that were the case, why should gramophone needles not be

made of copper? At least a copper needle would not lose its point for a turn or two; and it is the outer turns of the records, on which the needle has a perfect point, that wear away the quickest. The reason is this, the softer metal *adheres to and tears away* the surface of the groove. The record cannot wear away the needle unless it adheres to it, and if the record wears the needle, the needle will wear the record. The whole question is one of *adhesion*, and the effective difference in the result is just the difference between burnishing and grinding. If you wish to grind a hole through a piece of glass, do you use steel for the purpose? No, you use a rod of *copper*. What is the lapidary's wheel made from? Did our forefathers shape their arrow heads with hard tools? No, they used chisels of *reindeer bone*. Does the sharp Edison diamond stylus damage a record? If anyone who reads this is still in doubt on the subject let him get a new *unglazed* record of good quality, and a packet of "Euphonic" needles, the hardest I know, and play one side sixty or seventy times, watching the condition of the point, especially while the record is comparatively new, and renewing the needle directly wear can be seen. When the record is in good playing condition a needle will last for an hour. On taking the record off the machine, if the needle angle has been 45° and the needle track alignment correct, the used side of the record will not only show no wear, it will show *a better burnish than the unused side*.

Now, in reference to needle track alignment. The rule I gave would be the nearest to truth in nine cases out of ten, and was easily understood, and would, in the great majority of cases when fine needles with curved-sided points are used result in little or no wear being produced on the records. But there is the occasional machine, perhaps with the sound-box set at an angle to the tone-arm axis, or having a trombone goose neck with the sound-box carried left of the tone-arm axis. In the case of such a machine, should appreciable wear on the records take place when good needles are in use, it would be well to check the needle track alignment in this way:—Put a record on the machine and put the needle gently on to the middle of the recorded position. If the fore and aft line of the needle follows the tangent of the circle from the point where the needle touches, or if it is only at a very small angle from the tangent, then your needle track alignment is not far wrong. But in those cases where the needle, when touching the middle of the recorded portion is at the point where it touches obviously skewing across the groove, the best course to pursue is to raise the record from the spindle, put some books under it and shift its centre about until by experiment you find the position in which the needle, when tried all over the track, will show the smallest *average* of skewing. Average

the skewing error, do not get it all at one part of the record.

Some readers quote the earlier opinions of distinguished writers. Three letters quote Mr. H. Gaydon. Now turn to Mr. Gaydon's latest gramophone design in the *Sound Wave* for January last. There you will see a stylus bar set at 45° angle, a large sound-box, a straight tone-arm, no obstructions at the base of the tone-arm, no angles in the horn cross section, an unfastened front to the horn, an open front to the horn chamber, and no louvres. Can one imagine a better combination in the nature of a compromise to fit into a cabinet of conventional kind?

To those writers who quote H.M.V. and Columbia I would say: which large manufacturer was *the last* to change over from the tiny sound-box? which manufacturer was *the last* to change over from the highly strangulated tone-arm? Have you any idea of the cost entailed to a huge advertising concern in making even a *trivial* alteration in design?

I stoutly maintain that one can only get good results from a big horn when using a sound-box of large energy. I dislike fibrous diaphragms, but for a machine with a 22 inch horn difficult to fill, I am using an "Astra" sound-box. For all other medium to large sized machines, I use a 65 mm. sound-box. But with small portables (not "Deccas") I get very little better results from a 65 mm. box than I do from a cheap 55 mm. one. The "Decca" has an exceptionally good resonator and well pays for a 65 mm. or a Lenthall sound-box.

Mr. Little's entertaining letter makes one wish he would write *constructively*. There must be thousands of people having H.M.V. No. 2 sound-boxes, who cannot afford to buy another box. If Mr. Little would tell us how to make the No. 2 give as big a tone, as true a tone, and as correct a scale balance as a good 65 mm. sound box, he would be performing a public service.

I had an enquiry to-day about minimising the noise from a motor. In the absence of details I said: "If the noise comes from the gears put some vaseline on them. If it comes from a spindle rattling in its upper bearing pile some vaseline round the spindle over the bearing so that it can work through gradually." I may say I find vaseline piled round the socket bearing the best thing for a buzzing tone-arm incurable by readjustment.

Those who need a cabinet machine tone-arm for use with a large amplification, should see the largest size straight pattern tone-arm made by the Unbroken Wave Co. It has an internal diameter of 2 inches at the base, and is the only thing of the kind I know.

Yours faithfully,

H. T. BARNETT.

Portsmouth.

"WHAT IS AN ORCHESTRA?"

By S. K. RUTHERFORD

I HAVE just been reading Captain Barnett's little book, "Gramophone Tips," and note that he mentions "Military Orchestras." I have never heard this expression used before, and perhaps a few notes under my heading, and incidentally a word or two about bands, will help readers of this paper to understand once and for all, about the instruments which go to form these very different organisations.

Firstly, let me dwell briefly on the two kinds of bands, neither of which are in any way connected with orchestras. (1) Military bands. This term is used for an organisation composed of woodwind, brass, and percussion, and it need not necessarily be an army band. These bands, in concert performance, frequently play orchestral music, specially transcribed for them, and very cleverly this is done *sometimes*. The clarinets are usually numerous and may be regarded as the most important instruments. They are divided up to play several parts. There are also flutes, oboes, and bassoons (with piccolo and cor anglais as required), and, in recent times, saxophones. The brass includes horns, cornets (trumpets too in the best bands), euphoniums, trombones, and brass basses. Stringed basses are sometimes added for concert work. The percussion is usually in charge of two, rarely three, players, and they manage all the usual instruments of this class, except timpani, which are not usually to be found in the regular complement of instruments. The most important in this section are the side and bass drums and cymbals. (2) Brass band. This name is given to a band *solely composed of brass instruments*, with no woodwind, but with side and bass drums occasionally. The brass players are more numerous than in the military band and include various kinds of horns in addition to those enumerated above. The leading instruments are the cornets.

Now we come to the greatest and most flexible of all musical bodies—the *orchestra*. What is an orchestra? Many people appear to think that a piano, 'cello, and violin in a café form an "orchestra." An orchestra in the correct sense of the word is the full symphony orchestra. To give an exact description of every instrument is beyond the needs of this little article, and I intend, therefore, simply to enumerate the various kinds of instruments, of the four groups—strings, woodwind, brass, and percussion. In this case I cannot do better than to take the actual numbers of one of the best known London orchestras on records,

namely, the Royal Albert Hall Orchestra. This orchestra records for H.M.V. and at its full strength comprises approximately eighty players. The following details are taken direct from the orchestral list in one of the Albert Hall "Saturday Prom" concert programmes. (a) Strings:—15 first violins, 13 second violins, 8 violas, 9 'cellos, 8 double basses. (b) Woodwind:—2 flutes, 1 piccolo, 2 oboes, 1 cor anglais, 2 clarinets, 1 bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 1 double bassoon. (c) Brass:—4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones (2 tenors and 1 bass), 1 tuba. (d) Percussion:—four players, the first with timpani and the other three with such of the minor instruments (bass drum, side drum, triangle, tambourine, cymbals, glockenspiel, and xylophone, &c.) as are required in the score. Last of all comes the harp.

I do not propose to try to make readers think that the whole of this body is used for recording. To begin with the strings are cut down considerably to perhaps about 6 first violins, 4 second violins, 2 violas, 2 'cellos, and 1 bass, the latter being usually helped out by bassoons or tuba (extra).

These numbers merely give a rough idea, the details vary with the requirements of the different recording companies' operators, and the type of work being recorded. The woodwind and brass are recorded in full as required by the score of the work in question. The same applies to the percussion with the exception of the bass drum, which, I understand, is unrecordable owing to its excessive vibration when struck; again, cymbals are used by beating one with a drumstick, and are not struck together, and timpani are played with wood-headed sticks instead of the usual felt-headed ones. These two methods improve the recorded result. In days gone by I have an idea that the harp part was played on a piano. Perhaps the greatest improvement of late years has been in the recording of harp and horns. The celesta is also used when needed, of course, although I find it is not actually in the list given.

The example of an orchestra that I have given will help owners of orchestral records to understand "how it is done." The details must vary with the works performed, as for instance, in the records (H.M.V.) of Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelungs* and the Columbia records of Holst's *Planets* which require considerable additions in the woodwind, brass and percussion, and an extra harp. In the former there are 6 harps, and several tenor tubas, all of which are in the records according to the published notes given with the records.

"Small orchestras" are those used by the lesser recording companies for light music, but these and dance orchestras do not come into the scope of these notes. All this information is given by me from details picked up from people "in the know" and orchestral players who do the work, many of whom I meet constantly at concerts, as I am an amateur player myself. I have roughly 200 orchestral records to judge from.

Before I close this article, I think it would be of some interest to those who read it, if I mention some records from my own collection, which are good examples of the recording of the various instruments. They may not be the best, but they are the ones that come into my mind first, and most of the records are recent issues. The best way is for me to give the name of the instrument, and the title and number and make of the record. In some cases it is almost impossible to describe the part of the record alluded to, unless one says "one inch from the outside" and the like. I will do my best however. The records in many cases show exceptional effective scoring of the instruments.

STRINGS.

VIOLIN—

Solo: *Scheherezade Suite* (Rimsky-Korsakoff). Second movement, opening bars. Col. L1429.

Pizzicato: *Pierrot of the Minute Overture* (Bantock). Near the beginning. Col. L1463.

Massed: *Der Freischütz Overture* (Weber). Opening bars, etc. H.M.V. D624.

VIOLA—

Solo: *In the South Overture* (Elgar). In third part. H.M.V. D786.

Massed: *Symphony No. 7 in A* (Beethoven). Allegretto second movement. Col. L1481/2.

VIOLONCELLO—

Opening of *William Tell Overture* (Rossini). Col. L1435. (This is well known, but I can't think of another.)

DOUBLE BASS—

Scherzo, Symphony No. 5 (Beethoven). A well-known passage. H.M.V. D667. (Examples of good recording of the bass are very rare.)

WOODWIND.

PICCOLO—

Solo: *Ronde* from eight Russian Folk Songs (Liadov). Voc. R6130. Also *Jupiter No. 4* of the *Planets* suite (Holst). In second half after completion of theme on the brass (from Part I.). Col. L1459.

FLUTE—

(a) *Forest Murmurs (Siegfried)* (Wagner). In Part II, duologue with clarinet. H.M.V. D561.

(b) *Mazurka Nuit de Noel* (Rimsky-Korsakoff). This is the second of the two short numbers on the first side of the disc. H.M.V. D656.

OBOE—

(a) *Don Juan* (Strauss). Long solo. Col. L1419/20.

(b) *Goodhumoured Ladies Ballet Suite* (Scarlati). Frequently throughout. H.M.V. D521/573.

COR ANGLAIS—

(a) *Chant Religieuse* from eight Russian Folk Songs (Liadov). Opening theme. Voc. R6130.

(b) *Dance Rhapsody No. 1* (Deliuss). Opening theme. Col. L1505/6.

CLARINET—

(a) *Forest Murmurs* (Wagner). With flute as above. H.M.V. D561.

(b) *Till Eulenspiegel* (Strauss). Frequently. H.M.V. D608/9.

BASS CLARINET—

Danse de la Fée Dragée (Casse Noisette) (Tchaikovsky). H.M.V. D127.

BASSOON—

(a) *L'Apprenti Sorcier Scherzo* (Dukas). Frequently throughout. H.M.V. D461.

(b) *Water Music* (Handel-Harty). Fifth movement, allegro deciso, middle section. Col. L1438.

CONTRA BASSOON—

Ma Mere Voie Suite (Ravel). Fourth movement (third record) *Beauty and the Beast*. The use of the contra bassoon to represent the beast is simply delicious! H.M.V. D709.

BRASS.

HORN—

(a) *Jupiter No. 4 The Planets* (Holst). Frequently throughout. Col. L1459.

(b) *Venus No. 2 The Planets* (Holst). At the beginning. Col. L1499.

(c) *Chasseur Maudit* (Franck). Frequently in Part I. Col. L1423.

TRUMPET—

(a) *In the South Overture* (Elgar). Reiterated notes at the end. H.M.V. D786.

(b) *Tam O'Shanter Scherzo* (Goossens). A very high leap upwards in the middle. H.M.V. D694.

TROMBONE—

(a) *The Planets* (Holst). No. 1 *Mars*. At the end the discords are very clear. Col. L1528.

(b) No. 6 *Uranus*. The pattern of four notes at the very beginning. Col. L1509.

TUBA—

(a) *Uranus* as above. Immediately after trombone, the same four notes. Col. L1509.

(b) *Fugue in C minor* (Bach-Elgar). Near the beginning. H.M.V. D614.

PERCUSSION.

TIMPANI—

(a) Two drums *Secret of Suzanna Overture* (Wolf Ferrari). Col. 908.

(b) Three drums: *Seventh Variation* (Troyte) of *Enigma Variations* (Elgar). A very famous passage this. H.M.V. D582.

(c) Four drums: *Uranus (The Planets)* (Holst). Same four notes after tuba passage. Col. L1509. N.B.—In *The Planets*, Holst wrote for six timpani (two players). It is a pity they do not reproduce better. *Jupiter* contains some exciting passages on all the six drums.

SIDE DRUM—

(a) *Salome's Dance* (Strauss). Col. L1422.

(b) *Golliwog's Cake Walk* (Debussy). H.M.V. D620.

(c) *Uranus (The Planets)* (Holst). With timpani opening, Part II. Col. L1509.

BASS DRUM—

Is never used in recording.

TENOR DRUM—

The best-known parts written for this instrument are in Wagner's *Funeral March, Ride of the Valkyries*, and *Rienzi Overture*, and Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel*. I believe the side drum was used instead in all these for recording.

"WHAT IS AN ORCHESTRA?"— continued.

CYMBALS—

(a) Single stroke:

Loud: *Entry of the Gods (Rhinegold)* (Wagner). H.M.V. D503.

Soft: *Finale of Dvorak's New World Symphony, Part I.* H.M.V. D613. This is very clear if you know where it is, but careful attention will find it.

(b) Roll: *Capriccio Espagnol* (Rimsky-Korsakoff). Col. L1148. Part I. Also in Part II. of *Jupiter*. Col. L1459.

BELLS (large)—

(a) *Tam O'Shanter* (Goossens). H.M.V. D694.

(b) *Chasseur Maudit* (Franck). Col. L1423.

GLOCKENSPIEL—

(a) *L'Apprenti Sorcier* (Dukas). H.M.V. D461.

(b) *Molly on the Shore* (Grainger). H.M.V. D694.

(c) *Pierrot of the Minute* (Bantock). Col. L1463.

TRIANGLE—

(a) *Faust Ballet Music* (Gounod). H.M.V. D31/32.

(b) *Mikado Overture* (Sullivan). H.M.V. D2.

(c) *Theme and Six Diversions* (German). H.M.V. D546/550.

TAMBOURINE—

(a) *Theme and Six Diversions* (German). H.M.V. D546/550.

(b) *Danse Arabe (Casse Noisette)* (Tchaikovsky). H.M.V. D125. (New recording of this.)

CASTAGNETS—

(a) *Witch's Ride (Hansel and Gretel)* (Humperdinck). H.M.V. D617.

(b) *Festivo* (Sibelius). Col. 908.

GONG—

(a) *Laideronette No. 3 of Ma Mere Toie Suite* (Ravel). H.M.V. D708.

(b) *Scheherezade* (Rimsky-Korsakoff). Near end of fourth movement with brass. One note. Col. L1356.

XYLOPHONE—

(a) *Uranus (The Planets)*. Col. L1509.

(b) *Kikimora* (Liadov). H.M.V. D620.

(c) *March of Protracted Death (Hassan)* (Delius). H.M.V. C1134.

HARP—

(a) *Venus (The Planets)*. Col. L1499.

(b) *L'Après Midi d'un Faune* (Debussy). Voc. J04030.

CELESTA—

(a) *Venus (The Planets)*. At end Part II. Col. L1499.

(b) *Kikimora* (Liadov). Octaves at end of slow section. H.M.V. D620.

TWO GOOD RECORDS OF ORCHESTRAL ENSEMBLE—

(a) *Le Chasseur Maudit* (Franck). Col. L1423.

(b) *Russlan and Ludmilla Overture* (Glinka). H.M.V. D659.

Finally, I hope all this will give an idea of the composition of a modern orchestra and the use of the instruments as opposed to the two kinds of bands.

S. K. RUTHERFORD.



Analytical Notes and First Reviews

The March records, with the exception of dance records, have been shorn of a great deal of the notice due to them by the fact that they came under the Editor's Quarterly Review. Space forbids the inclusion here of those which were not mentioned in that Review, but analytical notes of some of the March Columbias, held over from last number, are appended. The New Poor Page is also squeezed out by the important new April issues.

COLUMBIA.—L.1535, 1536, 1537 (12in., d.s., 7s. 6d. each).—**Arthur Catterall** (violin) and **William Murdoch** (piano): **Sonata in D minor, Op. 108** (Brahms).

All "Brahmins" will welcome the addition of this beautiful work to the repertoire of the Master's recorded music. It is now possible to trace the progress of the violin sonata from Purcell to John Ireland, though we need records of Corelli and Bach sonatas very badly. Brahms wrote three sonatas for violin and pianoforte, of which this one in D minor is the last. It was composed in 1886.

Part I. Allegro.—The violin sings the broad but rather melancholy first tune supported by a syncopated accompaniment of a type which Brahms was very fond of. A few phrases of tune are then heard on the piano, and the next landmark is the announcement of the tender second tune by the piano, which is subsequently taken up by the violin. A slight pause indicates the end of the exposition and the beginning of the development of the first tune which continues to the end of this part.

Part II.—The violin sings the first tune as it originally appeared, and a most striking burst into the major key (A major) follows. The music becomes dramatic and turbulent until the repetition of the second tune on the piano as before; then the music boils up again to what is virtually a long coda based on the first tune. A very tender statement of it concludes this movement, the violin dropping to a low A.

Part III. Second Movement, Adagio.—This is one of Brahms' most beautiful melodies—a long drawn out line exquisitely wedded to the piano part. On its re-appearance the piano doubles it an octave below. Simple as the movement is to listen to, there are present many ingenious touches which repay study of the score.

such as the cross rhythms just before and with the violin double-stopped phrase towards the end. There is a serenely beautiful little coda.

Part IV. Third Movement, Un poco presto e con sentimento.—A scherzo movement of an unusual kind. It is really in rondo form, the little uneasy figure heard first on the piano and then on the violin continually returning. The music begins in the minor key but moves to the major for a while; the tonality is constantly shifting. The violin part requires and receives true intonation as there are a good many double-stopping and chordal passages to be negotiated.

Part V. Fourth Movement, Presto Agitato.—Piano and violin in turn give out the turbulent first tune and later the chant-like second one. After the first has been developed for a short while an episode founded on a phrase of this first tune appears. It is calm and expressive at the start, but is gradually worked up into a considerable climax by means of syncopation, and the climax is at its height as this side finishes.

Part VI.—Gradually the turbulence of the music subsides and the second tune returns to the piano, the violin joining in a little later; but again the music grows agitated and there is a resounding statement of the first tune which forms the coda. The piano part is of great brilliance in this last movement. The interpretation is vigorous and excellent and the recording extremely good, though the piano part could have been heard more prominently with advantage in several places and in the whole of the second movement. Violin and piano sonatas are duets. The violin tone, good all through, is exceptionally beautiful in the second movement. There are no cuts.

Records on Approval

How many records are bought of which the purchasers tire in a week or two, *simply because they have been hurriedly bought without time or opportunity to hear them properly?* You cannot possibly judge of a record played in an ordinary shop with, possibly, two or three other records being "tried over" at the same time.

I am ready to send you a parcel of records (your own selection, if you wish) for you to try *upon your own gramophone* and in your own home—you only buy those you really like and wish to keep. Send me a postcard and I will give you full particulars of this novel "approval" scheme which has made such a revolution in record buying. Or, if it is convenient, I can give you the same perfect facilities for hearing all the latest and best records in my *private* audition rooms here. Give me a personal call and you will realise why "Imhof's" has become *THE* Record Centre of Musical London.

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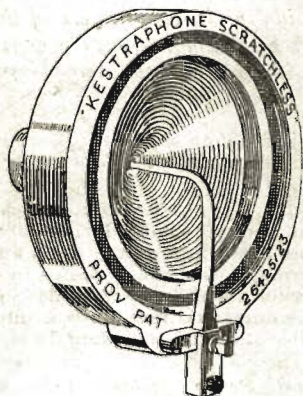
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COLUMBIA.—L.1533 (12in., d.s., 7s. 6d.).—**The Hallé Orchestra**, conducted by Hamilton Harty : **Le Coq D'Or** :—(a) **Introduction**, (b) **Wedding March (Cortège de Noces)** (Rimsky-Korsakov).

Part I. Introduction.—This, Rimsky-Korsakov's last, opera was written in 1905 but only produced in 1910 at Moscow, two years after the composer's death. The delay was due to the action of the censor, who found political implications in the plot! The music lover will trouble as little over these as over Wagner's theorising or Scriabine's theosophy. The story of the opera is as fantastic as Mozart's last opera, *The Magic Flute*, but more coherent, and finds fascinating expression in the music. On a muted trumpet the cockerel's cry—leit-motiv of the work—is heard, followed by arabesques on wood-wind and strings familiar to those who know the *Hymne au Soleil*, sung by Galli-Curci from this opera. These are associated with the beautiful queen of the story, and the staccato chords also frequently heard with the astrologer. A notable feature of the music is the writing for the clarinet, which comes out splendidly on the record. The cockerel's cry is heard at the end of this part.

Part II. Wedding March.—This side represents the return of the doddering old king, whose only wish is to sleep on all occasions, and of his wife, the beautiful queen who has enslaved him, to his capital after the wedding. The procession is, as the music amply assures us, of a highly barbaric description, and Rimsky draws on all the picturesque resources of the orchestra in painting it. What he said in *Scheherazade* he here says again even more brilliantly. The writing for the trombones should be especially noticed and also some delightful twittering passages for two flutes. There is a climax of great force which for once really "tells."

COLUMBIA.—L.1532 (12in., d.s., 7s. 6d.).—**London Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by the Composer : **The Planets**, No. 5, **Saturn (The Bringer of Old Age)** (Gustav Holst).

Programme music without a programme other than that suggested by the title lays itself open to many interpretations. Saturn is the bringer of old age, so the opening rhythmic figure on which this planet is based might be taken by the young to represent the limping of the rheumatically afflicted, and by the aged Time's relentless ticking. It is first heard on three flutes, a bass flute and harp harmonics, with surging wails from double basses. A chord on four horns brings us to the striking march-like first tune on tenor and bass trombones and tuba, the rest of the orchestra presently joining in. The rhythmic figure heard at the outset appears in pathetic guise on the four flutes as before, with harp and timpani accompaniment and is beginning to invade the whole orchestra as this side ends.

Part II.—It goes now to the brass and soon quickens in pace, as if the sands were running out very fast; there is a desperate appeal in its agitation; bells are heard clashing in the general uproar, but they lead to a beautiful andante section formed on the march theme—harp harmonics, and double bass solo—this is worked into a climax of some power, and we are left with an impression of the real nobility which old age should attain to. The scoring all through is of the greatest interest and has recorded exceptionally well, particularly in the brass department and, surprisingly, the double basses. Musically this planet is evidently the one to inhabit!

APRIL ISSUES.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—D.853, 854, 855, 856 (12in., d.s., 6s. 6d.).—**Royal Albert Hall Orchestra**, conducted by Eugene Goossens : **Pétrouchka** Ballet Music (Stravinsky).

The ballet *Pétrouchka* was composed by Stravinsky—round whose name controversy still rages—in 1910–1911, and first performed at Paris in 1911 and in London in 1913. It represents the composer at his middle period, the works on either side being *Oiseau de feu* (1910) (Columbia has issued a suite from this ballet) and the *Sacré du printemps* (1913). For many people Stravinsky is at his very best in *Pétrouchka*, which for fantastic humour and satire and a certain grimness is unique in music. In this ballet there is none of the uncouthness and harshness which became an obsession with the composer in his later works. Not to have seen the ballet is to have missed one of the artistic joys of our generation, but if the story is absorbed the music will still provide a richly picturesque comment, and will be found deeply interesting on its own account and in comparison with other modern symphonic works such as Strauss' *Don Juan*. The story is one of love and jealousy in a delicately ironic vein, enacted by the following caste: *Pétrouchka*, the Moor, *Ballerina*, (animated dolls); the Showman; a dancing bear, nursemaids, carnival-makers, etc., etc. Scene: St. Petersburg (1830).

Part I.—St. Petersburg in carnival time! The music is full of brilliant descriptive passages, of which the most entertaining is that depicting a rivalry between two barrel organs ending in their playing simultaneously, each his own tune. The orchestration of this episode is most ingeniously done; notice also the effective trumpet crescendos.

Part II.—After some more carnival music a subtle and sinister change comes over the music, betokened by muttering bassoons. From the puppets' booth at one side of the stage the old showman appears dressed as a magician and one versed in the black arts. He plays on his flute and draws back the curtains in front of the puppet stage disclosing the, as yet, lifeless dolls, *Pétrouchka*, the *Ballerina* and the Moor, each in a separate chamber. Then as he plays them into life with his flute they break into a wild dance. Towards the end of this dance there are some charming quiet passages which fall gratefully on the ear after the turmoil of the carnival. An effective point here is the sudden entry of the pianoforte.

Part III.—In *Pétrouchka's* chamber. The drama begins now that the puppets are momentarily endowed with life, and *Pétrouchka*—ugly, clumsy and deeply in love with the *Ballerina*—is seen declaring his passion; but the lady "with the pinkest of waxen cheeks and the glassiest of eyes" contemptuously repulses him. He flies into a rage and there is a most pathetic hint of his mental derangement in the music—one feels how driven the poor half-witted creature is!

Part IV.—In the Moor's chamber. The music takes on an oriental tinge and depicts the gross and sensual nature of the blackamoor.

Part V.—Enter the *Ballerina* playing on the cornet a doll-like and absurd tune to the accompaniment of a side-drum. A love scene between the Moor and herself follows which is, as it should be, utterly superficial and stiff-jointed; there is delicious satire here. To them enters the wildly jealous *Pétrouchka*; the music becomes veiled and sinister. *Pétrouchka* is pushed out struggling!

Part VI.—Carnival again in the square outside; a relief from the impending puppet tragedy. There is a delightful dance of nursemaids and then appears a dancing bear to add to the prevailing gaiety.

Part VII.—The music pounds and whirls and groans in the height of carnival merriment when suddenly there are cries from *Pétrouchka's* chamber—a muted trumpet sounds.

Part VIII.—*Pétrouchka* rushes in pursued by the Moor and a desperate fight ensues; *Pétrouchka* falls and sheds his life's sawdust! The crowd are horrified and in vain the old showman explains he was only a doll; they disperse leaving him with the body and the now lifeless Moor and *Ballerina*. It grows dark; snow is falling; he shivers; high up on the roof of the puppet booth a horrible green lit figure appears—*Pétrouchka's* ghost. In terror the old showman flees. A muted trumpet and a low muttering bassoon bring down the curtain.

So ends this remarkable work. Many listeners unfamiliar with the ballet or this composer's peculiar methods of expression may find the music at first repellent, but with repeated hearings its fascination slowly and surely grows. The drama lives in the music even apart from the action—and Nijinsky's *Pétrouchka* was unforgettable—and the music itself is amazingly vital and interesting purely on its own account. One may regard the small tragedy of the puppets as a satire on human passion and this view illuminates the character of the music. There are few appeals to melodic beauty though bits of Russian folk tunes are scattered up and down the score, and reliance is placed on all kinds of picturesque and dynamic effects on wood wind, brass and percussion; the strings are never used in the accepted manner. To the student (in the widest sense) of orchestration this work must be of extraordinary interest since there is hardly a bar without something to rivet the attention. The score is procurable at Chester's, 18, Great Marlborough Street, and a duet version also exists. Pictures of the ballet can be found in various books on the art of the Russian ballet and will be found most helpful in visualising the action.

Recording, playing, and interpretation are worthy of all praise.

COLUMBIA.—L.1538, 1539, 1540, 1541 (12in., d.s., 7s. 6d. each).—**Felix Weingartner** conducting the **London Symphony Orchestra**: **Symphony No. 8** (Beethoven), in 7 parts, and **The Tempest, Entracte, Ferdinand and Miranda** (Weingartner).

The complete recording of Beethoven's "little" symphony—he called it so himself—is extremely welcome, for, as Grove says in his excellent book on the symphonies, here more than in any other

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On exhibition at White City (B.I.F.), Wembley (British Empire Exhibition).

of the nine is a portrait of the author in his daily life and here he will be found in his most natural and characteristic vein.

The *Eighth Symphony* was composed in October, 1812, and first performed in 1814; a letter written in July, 1812, "to a very young lady worshipper" reveals the state of mind of the composer at this time: "Go on," he says, "don't only practise your art but force your way into its secrets; art deserves that, for it and knowledge can raise man to the Divine." The symphony calls for the usual Beethoven orchestra but without trombones, and in the second movement trumpets and drums are silent. It cannot be analysed in a small space with any thoroughness, and those who wish to study it in detail should consult Sir George Grove's *Beethoven and his Nine Symphonies*. There are no cuts.

(Miniature score, Goodwin and Tabb, 2s. 6d.)

COLUMBIA.—L.1545, 1546, 1547, 1548 (12in., d.s., 7s. 6d. each).—**The Lener String Quartet: Quartet in C major (Mozart).** In 8 parts.

This quartet is one of a set of six composed in 1785 and dedicated to Haydn; we are told that these quartets helped to reconcile Leopold Mozart to his son because they called forth such high praise from the aged Haydn who said to the delighted father, "I declare to you before God as a man of honour, that your son is the greatest composer I know, either personally or by reputation." In return for this eulogy Mozart dedicated these quartets to Haydn, saying, "It is but his due, since from Haydn it was that I first learnt how to compose a quartet." So everyone was happy.

The introduction, "adagio" to the first movement greatly disturbed conservative critics both then and in later times, and has caused much wagging of academic heads. The publisher patron, Prince Grassalkowicz, to whom the quartets were sent, made himself a laughing stock for all time by tearing up several pages of the quartets in a rage, and declaring others to be "full of mistakes" and "too advanced." The playing of the Lener Quartet and the recording are first class, and there are no cuts.

(Miniature score, Goodwin and Tabb, 1s. 6d.)

COLUMBIA.—L.1544 (12in., d.s., 7s. 6d.).—**William Murdoch (piano): Sonata in G. Major, Op. 49, No. 2 (Beethoven).**

Beethoven's Op. 49 consists of two little sonatas—sonatinas really—of which this is the second; the next sonata he wrote was Op. 53 in C, the *Waldstein*, and the difference in style is remarkable. It seems certain that these "easy" sonatas were written long before their year of publication—1802—and not given an opus number until much later. There are only two movements fully recorded here and the second—a rondo marked tempo di minueto—is based on a tune used later for the minuet in the septet. Mr. Murdoch makes this little work—which must be child's play to him—sound very pleasant and the record should prove very useful to pianoforte teachers who wish to put an excellent interpretation before their pupils.

COLUMBIA.—L.1549 (12 in., d.s., 7s. 6d.).—**Dora Labbette (soprano): Rose Softly Blooming (Spohr) and When Daisies Pied and Violets Blue (Arne).** Piano accompaniment.

Two charming old songs simply and delicately sung by Miss Labbette, but her trill at the end of the latter is not quite successful.

COLUMBIA.—971 (12 in., d.s., 4s. 6d.).—**Leo Strockoff (violin): Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso (Saint Saëns).**

Strockoff follows quickly down the H.M.V. primrose path of last month, which has also been trodden by Elman. But, needless to say, he makes a good record with a steady competence which contrasts with the youthful *Parade* of William Primrose.

EDISON RECORDS.

80770.—**American Concert Orchestra: Andante Cantabile** (adapted for orchestra) (Tchaikovsky, Op. 11). **Largo from New World Symphony** (No. 5 in E minor) (Dvořák, Op. 95).

82308.—**Albert Spalding (violin): Valse Capriccio (Wieniawski, Op. 7): Love sent a Little Gift of Roses** (Openshaw—Spalding).

82307.—**Albert Spalding: Paderewski's Menuet** (arranged by Fritz Kreisler) (violin solo); pianoforte by André Benoist. **Hark! Hark! the Lark** (transcription, Schubert—Spalding).

80773.—**Salvatore de Stefano (harp solo): (a) Canzonetta** (Raphael Martenet); **(b) Concert Etude No. 2** (A. Zabel) **Am Spring brunnen** (At the fountain) (Zabel).

65503.—**Kirilloff's Balalaika Orchestra: Kohanochka (Little Darling) and Lezginka.** (Lezginka is a national dance of Lezgins, inhabitants of the Caucasus.)

65504.—**Kirilloff's Balalaika Orchestra: Wengerkka and Pas d'Espagne** (Russian dances).

51269.—**Billy Jones (tenor): When it's Night-time in Italy it's Wednesday Over Here** (James Kendis—Low Brown). **Robert Denning (tenor) and Chorus: Happy and go-lucky in my Old Kentucky Home.**

82309.—**Claudia Muzio (soprano, in Italian): Se vano, se vano èil pregare from I Lombardi (Verdi); Egli è bel come il ciel from Erodiade (Massenet).**

51285.—**Ferdinand Himmelreich (piano solo): Believe me if all those Endearing Young Charms** (transcription (Tom Moore); **Last Hope** (transcription) (Louis Gottschalk).

51273.—**Kaplan's Melodists: So this is Love** (waltz from *Little Miss Bluebeard*) (E. Ray Goetz), and **I'd Love to Waltz through Life with you** (waltz from *Ziegfeld Follies of 1923*) (Victor Herbert).

80774.—**Charles Hart (tenor): Oh Paradise—Africana** (Meyerbeer), and **Celestial Aida—Aida** (Verdi).

51284.—**Lewis James (tenor): Mother Goose Songs, 3 and 4.**

The Editor has already alluded to the general quality of music recorded by the Edison Co., so it only remains to select the best from the above list.

The New World Symphony snippet merely tantalises us, so fine is the orchestral recording, giving us only a taste, as it were, of what *might* be. Both Albert Spalding's records are worth having for the sake of Albert Spalding and his violin. Salvatore Stefano's harp solo is a remarkable piece of recording. Surely the harp has never been so truly reproduced before. There is none of the usual woolliness but the tone is pure harp with its twang and tang, as well as the liquid sweetness. The Balalaika records are jolly, but perhaps too full of repetition. There never seems to be enough tune to go round. Billy Jones is always good, and his fruity tenor in the bit of *O sole mio* which he gives in *When it's Night-time in Italy* is delightful.

VOCALION

The April bulletin, apart from the debut of the Spencer Dyke String Quartet, can boast a more than average level of good stuff. Lazzari sings the *Calf of Gold* from *Faust* as well as any of his predecessors. Olga Haley's *Chanson Triste* (Duparc) is simply and easily rendered and makes a good pair with Schubert's *Wohin?* and whatever one may think of Eric Marshall's and Malcolm McEachern's choice of songs, one cannot deny that they are magnificently recorded. Sapellnikoff is as good as ever in Mendelssohn's *Scherzo*, Op. 16, No. 2, and the *Hungarian Dance* No. 6, which we are glad to have on the piano for a change. Adila Fachiri and Jelly D'Arányi break new ground with a *Bach Gigue* for two violins (Ethel Hobday at the piano), and the *Larghetto* from Spohr's *Sonata in D*, unaccompanied; not an entirely successful record, but none the less well worth having, and Miss D'Arányi plays two solos (R.6141) accompanied by Mrs. Hobday: Schumann's *Gartenmelodie*, and a jig from F. S. Kelly's *Suite for Flute and Piano*, Op. 7, which suits the violin well enough.

PARLOPHONE

The Bach-Gounod *Ave Maria*, sung by Greta Mancke, is hardly worthy of Handel's *Largo* as sung by Mme. Heckmann-Bettendorf, but it would be good enough in other company. The *Largo*, especially if heard from a distance, has the moving simplicity of authentic greatness; and, on another record Mme. Heckmann-Bettendorf joins with Emma Bassth in the *Evening Prayer* and the *Dance Duet* from Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*. These two records (4s. 6d. each) will be secured by anyone who appreciated *Senta's Ballade* last month. For the rest of the Parlophone issue—Marek Weber and his orchestra are always reliable; they are at present unsurpassed in restaurant music; Edith Lorand and her orchestra are very effective in a *Siciliana* and a *Tarantella*; and Joan Manen's violin solos follow the beaten track with a somewhat *blasé* virtuosity. The band of the Life Guards play selections from four Gilbert and Sullivan operas on four good records. It remains to be seen whether the Parlophone Co. can give us all this good cheap music without sacrificing quality and longevity of material.

HELOT.

Editor's Note.—I was taken to task some months ago for not being kind enough to the Gluck and Homer records from *Hansel and Gretel*. Perhaps I wasn't, but if anybody wants to hear Gluck and Homer sung right off this small green earth of ours let him secure the double-sided Parlophone record (E.10092) of Emmy Heckmann-Bettendorf and Emma Bassth. These are the *best* soprano and contralto duets I have ever heard either on the gramophone or in the opera house. A real superlative, and it costs 4s. 6d. It is so silvery that I believe if you offered the record as coin of the realm not even a taxi-driver would look twice at it.—C.M.

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EDISON.

51275. *The Merry Sparklers*, *** "Wow!" "Stay Home, Little Girl, Stay Home" (Waltz).
 51276. *Stevens' Trio*, *** "Along the Rainbow Trail." *Fletcher Henderson and his Orchestra*, *** "Shake Your Feet."
 51277. *Fletcher Henderson and his Orchestra*, *** "Linger Awhile." *Stevens' Trio*, *** "Teach me How."
 51281. *California Entertainers*, *** "Dream Daddy," *** "Take, Oh Take those Lips Away."
 51282. *Broadway Dance Orchestra*, *** "Headin' Home," *** "That Bran' New Gal O'Mine."
 51283. *Broadway Dance Orchestra*, *** "Raggedy Ann," *** "In Love with Love."
 51289. *Nathan Glanz and his Orchestra*, *** "Tweet, Tweet." *Ernest Stevens' Dance Orchestra*, "There are Some Things You Never Forget."
 51279. *Kaplan's Melodists*, *** "When You Love," *** "I'll be Here When You Come Back (but I'll be With Somebody Else)."
 51288. *The Merry Sparklers*, *** "Blue Rose," ** "Dancin' Dan."

BRUNSWICK.

- 2457.B. *Joseph Smith and his Orchestra*, *** "Seduction" (Tango), *** "Alma de Bohemio" (Tango).
 2476.B. *Lyman's California Ambassador Orchestra*, *** "Cut Yourself a Piece of Cake," *** "No, No, Nora."

VOCALION.

- X.9398. *Frank Banta and Cliff Hess* (piano duet), *** "Shake Your Feet" and *The Kentucky Colonels*, *** "Steppin' Out."
 X.9399. *Emil Coleman's Hotel Ambassador Orchestra*, *** "Linger Awhile" and *** "The Only Girl."
 X.9400. *The Kentucky Colonels*, "I've Got a Song for Sale," and *The Castilians*, *** "My Beautiful Heaven" (Waltz).
 X.9402.—*Emil Coleman's Trocadero Orchestra*, *** "The One I love" and *The Kentucky Colonels*, *** "I'm Goin' South," (Blues).
 X.9403.—*The Kentucky Colonels*, *** "Wow!" and *The Southampton Srenaders*, *** "Mississippi Ripples."
 X.9404.—*Selvin's Dance Orchestra*, *** "Half-past Ten" and *The Castilians*, *** "The Pearl of the West."

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.

- B.1763. *The Albany Dance Orchestra*, "When it's Night Time in Italy," *** "Arabiana."
 B.1757. *The Albany Dance Orchestra*, *** "Haggis," *** "Twelve o'clock at Night."
 B.1762. *Jack Hylton and his Orchestra*, *** "Just Keep on Dancing," *** "Who Did You Fool after All?"
 B.1761. *The Manhattan Merry-makers*, *** "Down on the Farm," *David H. Silverman and his Orchestra*, *** "Mean Blues."
 B.1748. *Brook Johns and his Orchestra*, *** "Nobody But You," *Manhattan Merry-makers*, *** "Ev'ry Night I Cry Myself to Sleep Over You."
 B.1746. *International Novelty Orchestra*, *** "I Love Me," *Benson Orchestra of Chicago*, *** "No! No! Nora."
 B.1749. *Benson Orchestra of Chicago*, "I'm Drifting Back to Dreamland" (Waltz). *Waring's Pennsylvanians*, "Sleep" (Waltz).
 B.1760. *Waring's Pennsylvanians*, *** "Stack o'Lee Blues," *International Novelty Orchestra*, *** "There Are Some Things You Never Forget."
 B.1747.—*The Benson Orchestra of Chicago*, "March of the Mannikins" and *Joe Raymond and his Orchestra*, *** "Moonlight Kisses."
 B.1771.—*Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra*, *** "Linger Awhile" and *** "Roamin' to Wyomin'."

- B.1772. *Ted Weems and his Orchestra*, "Covered Wagon Days" and *International Novelty Orchestra*, "Rosita."
 B.1773.—*Brooke Johns and his Orchestra*, "Take, oh, take those lips away," and *David H. Silverman and his Orchestra*, "Mamma goes where Papa goes."
 B.1774.—*Frank Herbin* (piano), "Peanut Cackle" and *** "Coaxing the Piano."
 B.1775.—*Jack Hylton and his Orchestra*, *** "Syncopation on the Brain" and *** "Doo-dah Blues."
 B.1780.—*The Romaine Orchestra*, *** "Dead Roses" and *** "Lady of the Lake" (Waltzes).
 B.1781.—*The Romaine Orchestra*, *** "Gigolette," and *Jack Hylton and his Orchestra*, *** "Ritzi Mitzi."
 B.1782. *The Romaine Orchestra*, "That's Everything" and *** "Lovey come back."

COLUMBIA.

- 969 (12in.). *The Savoy Orpheans*, "American Medley (one step)," "Scottish Medley" (one step).
 3374. *The Savoy Orpheans*, *** "When it's Night Time in Italy it's Wednesday Over Here," *** "I Love You."
 3378. *Azuley Blanco Marimba Band of Guatemala*, *** "Chicago," *** "Wounded Bird."
 3392. *Azuley Blanco Marimba Band*, *** "Juarez Avenue" and *** "Buddha Smiled."
 3393. *Ferera's Hawaiian Instrumental Quartette*, "Flower of Hawaii" (Waltz), and "Mahina Malamalama" (Waltz).
 3395. *The Savoy Orpheans*, "Maggie! Yes, Ma,!" and "That's Everything."
 3402. *The Savoy Orpheans*, "Passionetta," and "March of the Mannikins."

ACTUELLE.

10596. *Casino Dance Orchestra*, *** "Stingo Stungo" and "When it's Night-time in Italy."

PATHÉ.

1764. *Casino Dance Orchestra*, "No, No, ora" and *** "Born and Bred in Brooklyn."
 1766. *Bernard and Fields* (vocal duets), *** "Maggie! Yes, Ma" and *** "Last Night on the Back Porch."

IMPERIAL.

1250. *Six Black Diamonds*, *** "Every Night I Cry Myself to Sleep Over You." *Roseland Dance Orchestra*, *** "Take, oh take, Those Lips Away."
 1251. *Imperial Dance Orchestra*, *** "If I Can't Get the Sweetie I want," *Roy Collins' Orchestra*, vocal chorus, *Billy West*, *** "When it's Night Time in Italy, it's Wednesday Over Here."



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

(1) The Linguaphone language records, a set of 15 d.s. records. Bad surface but remarkably good diction. To illustrate musically the already pictorial "Course of French in 30 lessons" published by the Linguaphone Institute.

(2) A Sonora table model (£19 10s.) from Messrs. Keith Prowse and Co. with an Audiophone loud-speaker for use with gramophones. We have had many enquiries about both of these, and a report shall be made in the May number.

(3) A Cameraphone.—Another baby gramophone which claims equality with its elders from the Repeating Gramophone Co., which, by the way, has the London rights also of the Everplay needle. On a first trial the Cameraphone seems as efficient as it is small and neat and cheap.

(4) A packet from Messrs. Daws Clarke and Co., containing a Wade cutter No. 2, a needle tension, and some Hall fibre needles, the new concave type as well as the old straight type.

In due course we hope to test and report upon all these matters.

The Everplay Needle.—As my readers probably know, I am personally much enamoured of wire needles for string records, by which, in combination with a mica sound-box, that flutey effect is eliminated. The Everplay is by far the best wire needle that I have yet come across. The question of its wear on records can only be decided by the investigations of a dozen devoted readers!—C. M.

CORRESPONDENCE

De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum

[All letters and manuscripts should be written on one side only of the paper and should be addressed to the Editor, The Gramophone, 25, Newman Street, London, W.1. The writer's full name and address must be given. A stamped envelope must be enclosed if an answer or the return of a manuscript is desired. The Editor wishes to emphasise the obvious fact that the publication of letters does not imply his agreement with the views expressed by correspondents.]

REALISTS VERSUS IMPRESSIONISTS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—The gramophone, at its best, is generally considered to be an instrument for the reproduction of music. So the Realist would agree. If we add the words "in a pleasing manner," it then individually satisfies the Impressionist. The standard of the Realist is the maximum approximation to the original; the Impressionist, however, is essentially individualistic—liking just that which pleases him; if there be a peculiarity shared by Impressionists, it is an avid appetite for "body" tone.

Now, without assuming a pontifical pose, I would just detail a few comparative observations. One thing I have noticed—the Realists are generally "small box" men, mostly "Exhibition" size and type, and favour external horns. The Impressionists incline to large boxes and internal amplifiers. There are, of course, intermediate degrees. Some would place the H.M.V. No. 2 box as an Impressionist "body box." Personally, I do not think the H.M.V. people intended it for external horn use, but primarily for their "furniture models," and even thus it tends decidedly towards "body."

Another point—diaphragms with Realists are generally mica, with Impressionists a great range of silk and other single and laminated substances and metals find favour. Further, amongst a confraternity of connoisseurs (all Realists) that I happen to know, each uses from four to eight or more boxes for different categories of records. Most Impressionists appear satisfied with one or two boxes. Fibre needles appear more generally used by Realists; I did meet, however, an Impressionist who used fibre needles, wooden tone-arm, wooden diaphragm, wooden horn, and I think he only regretted he could not get wooden records: the only records I thought his combination did well was wood-wind instrumental.

With these preliminary, and no doubt somewhat staccato observations, I will now give my reasons for being a Realist, and my methods and means as one.

First—instruments. I use an external horn exclusively for vocals, orchestral, band, and piano; also an old model No. 3 H.M.V. internal amplifier instrument for most solo violin, Heifetz, Elman, Kreisler, &c. With the former (ex. horn) I use four different sound-boxes, all "Exhibition" size and type of cases, but with different stylus-bar tensioning—long and cross, and of different weights. With the latter instrument (internal), I use almost exclusively a U.S.A. Exhibition box. All boxes are tuned for fibre.

Regarding horns; no doubt with steel needles, metal tone-arm, and mica diaphragm, a wood horn is best, reducing the metallic twang, but I think this twang is eliminated at the initial point by the use of fibre needles, therefore, I use a sectional flat sided semi-neutral metal horn—H.M.V.—which with fibre gives a more forward and clean tone than wood. Wood horns being circular throughout seem to "eddy" and retain the sound. Mica diaphragms, again with fibre, give me the most consistent and permanent tone, other substances lacking these essentials, so far as I have observed by others' experience.

The delicate purity, delicious purr and soulful cry of Heifetz, Elman, and Kreisler violin magic I find I can only get reproduced on my old No. 3 H.M.V. internal, but the fire, vigour and force of Hubermann I get on the horn model.

I quite anticipate that many will think their own particular combinations better than mine, but, Realists, Impressionists, Fibre-ites, Steelites, Micaonions, Anti-micaonions, Big-boxers, Little-boxers, &c., *ad infinitum*, let not the charm of your variety be dulled by the acid of abnormal conceit, causing temper to upset artistic equanimity. Remember, we all eventually disintegrate into the components of our reconstructed mechanisms—we each are entitled to think our combinations as even ourselves to be "the highest form of matter."

"INDICATOR."

PATHÉ RECORDS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—I wish you could do something to get the Pathé Co. to bring out a larger proportion of the higher class of music. It is rather strange, for in some ways this firm has been very enterprising, especially in bringing out new forms of machines; and with regard to records, indeed, they used to advertise that they published more than 20,000 in all languages. I believe they were the first to bring out grand operas complete, and in their English catalogue for 1914 eight complete operas are listed, and in none of them, I think, are any of the parts doubled. In this 1914 list are also a complete tragedy of Corneille and a comedy of Molière, spoken by members of the Comédie Française. I use a horn Pathéphone and brass-mounted sapphire, with the old large "Concert" sound-box, which many think is better than the post-war sound-box. Captain Barnett, in his remarks on amplifiers, does not mention the Pathé "Difisor," in which the sound-box, tone-arm, and horn are replaced by a very large diaphragm, making an extraordinary simplification of reproduction. There have been remarks lately about some brilliant violin solos on the needle-cut. I have a Pathé record of the *Finale* from Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto*, by J. Rudenyi, which I think may be rather remarkable, though recorded twelve or more years ago. It is in the present catalogue and might astonish some people who do not know Pathé records.

Yours truly,

Colwyn Bay.

C. F. H.

[I have just tried the record of the Mendelssohn *Concerto*. The *adagio* on one side, and the *finale* on the other are both first-class, and what lovely melodies!—Ed.]

VIOLIN RECORDS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—I was much interested to pick up a copy of your fine paper, THE GRAMOPHONE, some weeks ago. The gramophone has for many years been a source of very great enjoyment to me. Some fifteen years ago I played first violin in one of the leading symphony orchestras of Vienna; my masters had told me I might have a great future, but alas! in 1910 I had an accident in a motor-car, which completely shattered my left hand, and that was the end! Soon afterwards I bought a gramophone, which I soon found to be of the greatest consolation to me, though now I cynically wonder, had my masters' prognostications been fulfilled, as to what coloured label I might have been favoured with by the manufacturers of records!

My greatest interest is naturally in violin records, and it seems to me remarkable that out of the enormous number produced there should be so little of permanent value and interest. After all is said, the difference between great violinists and mediocre ones is not in the way they play rubbish but in the way they play masterpieces. I will make so bold as to say that it is a prostitution of talent for these superb artists to throw away their gifts on such abominable stuff. But no doubt it is largely a matter of fault with the gramophone companies. The red label mania seems to obsess them. The artists never seem to play pieces properly written for the violin, but hold to feeble "arrangements." In the last complete H.M.V. catalogue, there are 50 records by Mischa Elman, and 51 by Kreisler. Out of those, there are *eleven* pieces by Elman and *eight* by Kreisler (all of his own composition), which were originally written for the violin. All the others are arrangements. Is the state of violin literature really as low as all that? Of course it is not. There are four great standard violin concertos—the Beethoven, the Brahms, the Mendelssohn, and the Max Bruch. Of those we have at last got the first; and there is a superb double-sided record of the *Finale* from the Mendelssohn played by the great Spanish violinist Juan Manen, with the proper orchestral accompaniment. Of the rest—nothing! We have not yet got a complete rendering of the *Kreutzer Sonata*, though so far as it goes, the rendering by Messrs. Catterall and Murdoch is very fine indeed. But how of all the other Beethoven sonatas, how of all the Brahms, the Mozart, the Bach? (True, there are the *Spring* and the Mozart, Op. 8, but these are mere drops out of the ocean.) We wish, perhaps, to buy a record by Kreisler. What has he recorded? We look at the catalogue, and the first thing we see is *Underneath the Stars*, by Spencer, arranged by Pasternack! We hastily look further up the page, and encounter *The Rosary* (Nevin). Heavens! perhaps there will be something better over the page. We turn it—*Beautiful Ohio Waltz* (Earl). And this by the greatest violinist in the world! There are only four recording violin artists who, in my opinion, have justified their talents—Arthur Catterall, René

Chemet, Daisy Kennedy, and Isolde Menges. May I implore you, Sir, as speaking for all lovers of the violin, to use your influence in this direction? And may I note here the extraordinary policy of Columbia in giving us "snippets"? We have half the César Franck, half of three Grieg sonatas, and a quarter of two Brahms. Could not some of these "ends" be "tidied up"?

I have occasionally been asked by eager gramophone possessors learning that I too enjoyed their favourite hobby what I consider, say, the finest half dozen violin records procurable. I would, after much thought, reply with the following list, which I do not suppose would please every taste, but which I am quite sure would form an impeccable foundation for a collection of violin records, and might be of some interest to those seeking such information. At any rate, I have as yet received no complaints!

1 and 2. *The Spring Sonata* (Beethoven), Columbia. L.1231, 1232.—It must be obtained on the new wax, played by Mr. Catterall, otherwise it may disappoint. 3. *Sixth Sonata* (Handel), H.M.V., Kubelik.—The *Fourth Sonata*, by Mlle Menges, is much more complete, but it has not quite the magnetic personality of the Pole. 4 and 5. *Sonata in G minor* (Tartini), H.M.V., Mme. R. Chemet, two records; or *Romance in G* (Beethoven), Columbia, Daisy Kennedy, and *Finale from Concerto* (Mendelssohn), Parlophone, Juan Manen. 6. *Air on the G String* (Bach), H.M.V., Kubelik. Kubelik has the most exquisite pianissimo of any violinist I have heard; or perhaps I should say had, for he is certainly not now what he once was. This record is the ideal one for the end of a day's hard work. It is so gentle and "velvety" as to reveal the immense powers of the artist. I prefer it greatly to the record by Elman.

East Lothian.

Yours truly,

K. MASZKERISKY.

[I have both recordings of the Spring Sonata, and of course, quā records, there is no comparison. But I miss Mr. Sammons' interpretation, even though it *did* sound as if he was trying to play above the roar of the traffic.—Ed.]

CUTS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—Your correspondent, E. G. Lambie, draws an invidious distinction between the music *student* and the music *lover*, and both he and "H. R. G." appear to deprecate the present policy followed, usually, by the two largest recording companies of "no cuts." Does not love imply a desire to know, and is the music student also not a lover of music but a mere academic pedant and—here is the main point—when will the "ordinary music lover" realise that music is not just pleasing tunes but a great art, the intelligent study of which is due to it and will increase enjoyment of it—study, I mean, such as the veriest tyro can undertake? Mr. Scholes' book "The Listener's Guide" has passed through many editions which surely proves a sincere desire to further knowledge.

Do we only read bits of books—look at bits of pictures? A work of art must be looked at whole; particularly in the case of music, which is a fluid and not a static art, do we need to have a real grasp of the workings of it if we hope to come at all into intimate contact with the composer's mind.

I fully sympathise where finance or the bother of "turning over" are concerned, but I submit that one movement complete—there is no obligation to purchase the whole work—is worth any number of tit-bits and will be found to contain that "variety which is the spice of life" to H. R. G. Some of us have worked for years for the recognition of the gramophone as a genuinely musical factor, but if we are to get back to snippets—well! *Must* the powder contain so much jam? Will not H. R. G. and E. G. Lambie give music a fair chance—put it on a higher level and follow a movement or so with a score or, at any rate, without irrelevant thoughts?

Yours, etc.,

YOUR REVIEWER.

CUTS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—The letters of Messrs. E. G. Lambie and H. R. G. in your March number raise an interesting question. I cannot agree that "cutting" is justifiable save in very exceptional cases. But there is something to be said for the purchase or even the issuing of isolated movements from the less familiar symphonies and chamber works. The musical critic of *The Times* recently remarked that it would be a good plan to include in the programmes of popular concerts, instead of the short and often trivial pieces usually performed, some isolated movements (such as a scherzo or

a minuet) from the great classical symphonies. The same suggestion might be applied to the gramophone. Many of the quartets and symphonies of such composers as Haydn and Mozart, though not as a whole equal to the best, yet contain one movement or even two comparable with the best. The same is true of the works of less familiar composers. If some of these good movements could be issued, without cuts, on gramophone records, then completeness would satisfy the critic, and they would appeal also to those with slender purses and a taste for variety. Incidentally, many of these movements could be completely recorded on two or even on one side of a 12in. record. If quartets like the Lener and Flonzaley would confine themselves to short movements they would cease to outrage the purist, and remain just as attractive to those who admire their wonderful playing.

It is a pity that the Columbia Company did not think of this when they issued Beethoven's *Seventh Symphony* in nine parts on five records. If the extra piece added to make up an even number of parts had been put on the first record (with one of the three parts of the first movement) instead of on the last, it would have been possible to buy each of the last three movements complete on one record.

Yours, etc.,

L. J. H. BRADLEY.

St. Annes-on-the-Sea.

[A propos, the following lines reach me from San Diego.—Ed.]

"To the Recording Angels.

You give us records—many incomplete.

What can we do?

The antidote is ours—revenge is sweet.

We'll 'cut' them too!

F. H. MEAD."



"GRAMOPHONE NIGHTS," by Archibald Marshall and Compton Mackenzie (Heinemann), can be obtained from the offices of THE GRAMOPHONE, 25, Newman Street, W. 1. (5s., postage 4d.)

'Gramophone Tips' for 1924

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NOTES AND QUERIES

[Each comment, question, or answer should be written clearly on a separate slip of paper and addressed to THE GRAMOPHONE, 25, Newman Street, W. 1, as early as possible in the month. Full name and address must in all cases be given, for reference.]

(40) "Ah! Fors è Lui."—The defect is noticeable not only in the recitative, as your correspondent "Fosc" (March number, p. 212) states, but persists more or less throughout the air. It is most evident when I use my H.M.V. No. 2 Sound-box, which I think must be very sensitive, for I find the record bearable if I put on an Exhibition sound-box.—J. S., Tredegar.

(41) **The Warrener Mute.**—I agree with Mr. Gordon Tidey in the November number. I have tried almost every needle on the market . . . For clear sweet tone and absence of scratch I have not yet found the equal of an ordinary steel needle in conjunction with the Warrener Mute.—F. M., London, W. 1.

(42) **Twelve Best Records.**—(1) "Quartet in G major, No. 12: Molto allegro" (Mozart); "Quartet in D minor: Andante con moto" (Schubert); The Lener String Quartet (Columbia). (2) "Troncar suo di quell'empio: Guglielmo Tell" (Rossini); Martinelli, De Luca and Mardones (H.M.V.). (3) "Salut demeure chaste et pure: Faust" (Gounod); "Una furtiva lagrima: L'Elisir d'Amore" (Donizetti); Mario Chamlee (Brunswick). (4) "Ave Maria" (Schubert-Wilhelmi), Jascha Heifetz (H.M.V.). (5) "Celeste Aida forma divina: Aida" (Verdi), Giovanni Martinelli (H.M.V.). (6) "Song of the Volga Boatmen" (Chaliapin-Koenemann), Theodor Chaliapin (H.M.V.). (7) "Una voce poco fa: Il Barbiere di Siviglia" (Rossini), Amelita Galli-Curci (H.M.V.). (8) "Casta diva, che inargenti: Norma" (Bellini); "Non mi dir: Don Giovanni" (Mozart), Frieda Hempel (Edison). (9) "Capriccio Valse, Op. 7" (Wieniawski); "Romance: Concerto in D minor, No. 2" (Wieniawski), Bronislaw Huberman (Brunswick). (10) O soave fanciulla: La Bohème" (Puccini), Caruso and Melba (H.M.V.). (11) "Eri tu che macchiavi: Un Ballo in Maschera" (Verdi), Pasquale Amato (H.M.V.). (12) "Bella figlia dell'amore: Rigoletto" (Verdi), Caruso, Galli-Curci, De Luca and Perini (H.M.V.).—A. B. H., Blackburn.

(43) **Popular Records.**—At five concerts and two lectures which I have given with the gramophone in this town by far the most popular record has been a Vocalion played by Tertis of the famous "Melody in F" which has been enthusiastically received each time.—T. F. S., Crewe.

(44) **Columbia Records.**—It is to me a source of constant amazement that none of your reviewers or correspondents seem to do justice to the wonder of the new Columbia records. Nothing but a recording of Mozart's "E flat Symphony" or Goossens' "Sinfonietta" would ever induce me to buy any other make of record till I had explored all the resources of the Columbia catalogue . . . Add to the finer tone values the almost complete absence of scratch, crackle, rattle, blast and other expletive noises, and all that remains to be desired is that Dorothy Silk and Sir Thomas Beecham should exploit these advantages for us. Can it be that my cheap pre-war German sound-box (now, alas, irreparably disintegrating and not to be exchanged for many times its weight in three-guinea sound-boxes) is particularly suitable to these records? Have any other readers had a similar experience?—G. A. B., Sanderstead.

(45) **Sound-box Tests.**—If a central position of the needle relative to the record spindle gives the best results (as our experts give us to understand), it is apparently unfair to test a large sound-box on a machine built to take a small one . . . Perhaps, however, the central position of the needle is important only as regards wear on records, and not as regards the actual reproduction of sound. On my New Columbia Table Model with No. 7 sound-box, the needle touches fully 3 in. beyond the centre of the record, and yet gives as good results as any machine I have heard. From my own tests I can gather nothing definite relating to wear on records. Perhaps one of your readers can enlighten me.—G. D. F., Manchester.

(46) **Curing "Swingers."**—The following method is simple and easy and does not disfigure the discs. Place an object on the cabinet, close to the right side of the disc and near the middle line. I use a piece of card cut out to project over the edge of the disc and mounted on a piece of wood; this brings the edge of card

close to the sound-box, which should be fitted with a wood needle. Rotate the turntable slowly and watch the space between the card and the stylus bar. When this is at the minimum or, in other words, when the arm has reached the maximum swing to the right, stop the turntable. Now push the disc to the left half the distance of the complete swing of the arm from left to right. If this cannot be done, cut away the hole sufficiently on the right side, and put a mark on the label at that point to show where the edge of the hole must touch the spindle. It is not always necessary to cut away the hole because eccentricity is sometimes due to the way the disc is put on the turntable—the hole being too large. Each side of the disc is, of course, done separately.—G. L. J., Croydon.

(47) **The Bach Chaconne.**—I am surprised that no record has yet been made of this. Of course, the man to do it is Kreisler, but if he will not consent to step down from his airy trifles and to play us something worthy of himself, no one is more fitted for the task than Miss Isolde Menges. Her interpretation of the unaccompanied fugue from the First Sonata is the best thing she has done except the "Beethoven Concerto" . . .—C. E. R., Birmingham.

(48) **Lohengrin.**—Can you tell me of a really satisfactory record of the Prelude to Act I. of "Lohengrin"? I have just got H.M.V. D.129, as it was the only one I could find, but it is very poor, the high quiet parts of the violins being drowned in scratch. Also, a good "Lohengrin's Farewell." I have heard Frank Mullings (Col.) and Walter Hyde (H.M.V.), and neither were worth taking home. Paul Franz (H.M.V.) was out of stock with my local dealer.—H. F. D., Sheffield.

(49) **Handel's Sonata in D (H.M.V.).**—Played by Isolde Menges. Whose piano part is used and who plays it on the record?—C. E. R., Birmingham.

WORDS WANTED.

(50) "Connais-tu le pays (Mignon).

(51) "O Vecchio cor" (I Due Foscari).

(52) "Si vous l'aviez compris (Denza).

(53) "O sole mio."

—By F. D. V., 13 Leinster Square, London, W. 2.

(54) "Pipes of Pan" (Harold Williams, Col. 3232).

(55) "When Dull Care" (Edgar Coyle, Col. 3279).

—By E. G. L., N.W. 2.

CATALOGUE REFERENCES WANTED.

(56) Brahms Rhapsody No. 1 in B minor, Op. 79.—L. R., Bristol.

(57) Any records by Sophie Rowlands, Olive Sturges and Miss Grainger-Kerr.—C. H. E., Colchester.

(58) A really good contralto record of "Harvest" and "The Lord is My Light," other than Kirkby Lunn.—C. H. E., Colchester.

(59) Some instrumental records as good as the Mozart "Sonata in A" (Col. L.1494-5-6).—F. D. V., W. 2.

ANSWERS.

(5) **The Seventh Symphony.**—Bars 430 to 635 have been cut. They are almost an exact repetition of the opening presto, of which the first repetition is also suppressed.—G. A. B., Sanderstead.

(6) **"Hall of Song."**—Fremstad (Col. A.5281); Stralia (Col. 7243); duet, Stralia and Mullings (Col. 7257).—R. T., Cardiff.

Marie Rappold, Edison 82114 is the best.—A. B. H., Blackburn.

Also by M. S. T., Oxford, H. F. D., Sheffield, J. D., Banbury.

(14) **Best Records.**—Patti, "La Serenata"; Ruffo, "Credo" or "Serenade" (Faust); Amato, "Largo al factotum"; Clara Butt, "In questa tomba"; Melba, "Addio"; Paderewski, "Valse in C sharp minor"; Caruso, "No, Pagliaccio" or "Si vous l'aviez compris."—R. T., Cardiff.

Ruffo, "Adamastor, re dell'acque profonde" or "Credo"; Amato, "Eri tu," "Cortigiani," and "Su dunque" (with Gadsdi); Caruso, "M'appari," "O souverain," "Siciliana," "Vesti la giubba," "Ombra mai fu," "O soave fanciulla" (with Melba), and "Solenne in quest'ora" (with Scotti).—A. B. H., Blackburn.

(16) **Tenor Records.**—Hear some of these:—"O Paradiso" and "La Rêve"; "Salut demeure" and "Una furtiva lagrima"; "Cielo e mar" and "Brindisi"; all Mario Chamlee on Brunswick. "Celeste Aida," Martinelli; "Flower Song" from "Carmen"; "A te, o Cara," Fleta; "J'ai perdu mon Eurydice," Anseau; all H.M.V. And the best of Caruso, see reply to No. 14.—A. B. H., Blackburn.

Try "Ay, ay, ay," by Fleta.—G. S. W.

(17) **Marche Slave** (Tchaikovsky).—Amer. Col. A.5933: Columbia Symphony Orchestra (d.s., 12in.).—J. D., Banbury.

(18) **English Translation of the Mastersingers**—By Frederick Jameson, published by Messrs. Schott and Co., 2s.; can be obtained from Harold Reeves, 210, Shaftesbury Avenue, W.C. 2.—A. C. R., Plymouth.

(22) **Raff's Cavatina**.—Get both Elman and Powell.—R. T., Cardiff.

(23) **Ruffo, Tamagno and Plançon**.—For Ruffo's best see answer to 14.

(27) **Circulating Libraries**.—Owing to human nature, after about three months all records in circulation would be duds.—R. T., Cardiff.

(29) **Best Records Wanted**.—As price is a consideration I would suggest Col. light blue, A.5399 for "Miserere" and "O terra addio" sung by Emmy Destinn and Zenatello. As it is rather old, the recording may leave a little to be desired, but the voices are good and remarkably well balanced.—G. S. W.

Caruso and Gadschi do the best "La fatale pietra," but it costs 10s. 6d. Boninsegna does a d.s. record of "Ernani, involami" with "Pace mio Dio" (Col. A.5199, 7s. 6d.).—A. B. H., Blackburn.

"O soave fanciulla," H.M.V. 054129, Melba and Caruso.—J. D., Banbury.

(30) **Best Records Wanted**.—Try Chamlee (Brunswick) for the best record of "Una furtiva lagrima"; on the other side is "Salut demeure" from "Faust." The best 8s. worth I know of. There is a good d.s. Columbia (A.5184) of the duet from "Forza del Destino" by Blanchart and Constantino; on the reverse is "Suoni la trompa" by Blanchart and Mardones. For "E lucevan le stelle" try Lappas (Col. L.1463, d.s.) or Bonci (Col. D.8085, d.s.).—A. B. H., Blackburn. Also R. T., Cardiff.

(31) **Bella figlia dell'amore**.—H.M.V. 2-054066 is as good as any, an extremely fine record of a quartette.—G. S. W. Also A. B. H., Blackburn. J. D., Banbury.

(32) **Vesti la giubba**.—There must be something wrong with the Caruso record you heard. It is the *only* one of this much recorded song. I should be almost inclined to put Mummery's rendering on the Zonophone in front of Lappas.—G. S. W.

(35) **Tito Schipa**.—I should like to endorse the expressed view on Actuelle 10387 of Tito Schipa in arie from "Sonnambula" and "Falstaff." It is a remarkably cheap record.—G. S. W.

Yes.—Ed.

(38) **Talking Records**.—I have experienced much difficulty in getting satisfactory humorous talking records, probably due to lacking a sense of humour myself. Col. 3233, "The Meanderings of Monty," however, appeals, and may do so in your case. Col. 3218, "Parson addresses his flock"; Regal G.7115, "Casey at the Dentist's" and "Casey taking the Census" are also not too bad.—G. S. W.



Gramophone Societies' Reports

LOOKING through back numbers of THE GRAMOPHONE, I see that, with the possible exceptions of Liverpool and Sheffield, the London Societies have had far the greatest prominence. Perhaps they deserve it. They are well organised, they contain veteran experts in the provision of good and varied programmes, and they have energetic and often brilliant recording secretaries. Their reports are again to the fore this month. The North London P. and G.S. had an excellent programme of H.M.V., Columbia, Vocalion, Brunswick, and Parlophone records, given by Mr. S. H. Burden on a Seymour machine with Saturn sound-box, followed by a selection of Edison records very successfully presented on the same machine with a superphone sound-box and diamond stylus by Mr. J. T. Berry. The South London had a lecture and demonstration by the Gramophone Co., of which Mr. Howarth has sent me a masterly summary. The South East London had a lecture on "Music and Nature," by Mr. E. C. Coxall which, to judge from the *précis* and programme, must have provided a charming evening; and a programme of chamber music is promised, also by Mr. Coxall, for April 14th. The Brixton G.S. at the new H.Q., Morris Hall, 79, Bedford Road, Clapham, had a programme on March 3rd, given by the Secretary, Mr. J. T. Fisher, on a new Grafonola, with items from no less than nine different catalogues, and the March meeting of the West London G.S. consisted of an almost exclusively H.M.V. programme devised by Mrs. Desmonde and Mr. Simmons. On April 12th a sound-box test is to be held! But instead of printing the reports at length this month I want to find room for some extracts from an article which I have received from Mr. John C. W. Chapman, the author of "A Sentimental Gramophone," in our February number. It is entitled "Are the London Gramophone Societies in Peril?" He points out that the drainage of gramophone enthusiasts who have now turned their attention to the "vista opened up by the genius of Marconi" is not so serious a menace to the health of provincial societies as to that of London societies, which are comparatively small already, and "some of which are largely manned by associate members at reduced subscriptions." He pleads therefore for a London Federation, by the absorption of the smaller into the larger societies, so that overlapping may be abolished and a definite policy laid down as to what part the trade shall play in the movement. "The trade pros and cons are obvious. The private gramophonist of ordinary resources cannot hope to equal a programme supplied by the representative of a famous firm, whether manufacturer or music house. There are, of course, many gentlemen of ample means, who can, and do, beat the best trade shows by a good margin; but they

are exceptions and not the rule. Many members have neither time nor opportunities to spend hours in West End showrooms in quest of the ideal, and are glad when a trade show is featured. Some committees ban trade shows because Smith, McTavish, and Llewellyn O'Grady might have to postpone their programmes for a month or two, a dreadful tragedy to be averted at all costs! But enlightened societies contrive to find a place for both private and trade shows, which is as it should be, because, if it were not for that much-maligned trade, where on earth should we get our gramophones and records from? The presence of members of the trade as officials or committee-men is sometimes objected to—not always with common-sense or courtesy. It is argued that a trade official may use his position to create business for his firm. Is that more detrimental to the Society's interests than the action of a private official who foists his pet "cranks" to the obstruction of rational progress? To turn meetings into marts is just as inexcusable as the snobbish super-highbrowism that sneers when a programme of popular music is played, that frowns when some daring wight ventures to relieve the tedium of continuous symphony or opera with something on the lighter side, that refuses the courtesy of attention to that which is not precisely to its taste. A gramophone society is surely a democratic institution and not an aristocracy. That being so, the trade should receive reasonable opportunities to show what it can give." Mr. Chapman ends up with a suggestion that "an enlightened Press Campaign" should be initiated without the fear, apparently felt in some quarters, that it would attract the wrong sort of members "ignorant of recorded music and the gramophone in its highest form." He asks why the "bacon-box jazzers of to-day" should not be converted into the music lovers of to-morrow; and adds that larger membership would provide funds for larger halls and that finances must be recruited by regular subscriptions rather than by charging for programmes. If THE GRAMOPHONE may take a modest part in the enlightened press campaign, so much the better, and next month I hope that some of the leaders of the London Societies will allow me to present their views to our readers. Meanwhile the rest of the space allotted this month must go to the provincial societies.

CITY OF LEEDS GRAMOPHONE AND PHONOGRAPH SOCIETY.—The "Members Only" night held Tuesday, February 5th, before a crowded audience, consisted of a "Sound-box test." In all 12 different sound-boxes were used, ranging from the cheapest possible to the most elaborate creations in use. The boxes were tried out in three heats of four sound-boxes each heat, three being

eliminated from each heat by the vote of the audience, leaving three in the final test. All boxes played the *Jewel Song*, *Faust*, *Elsa Stralia* (Columbia), second and final test being *Thirteenth Hungarian Rhapsody* (piano), Busoni (Columbia). In all instances the judging was the vote of the assembled audience. First, the Acoustophone, the box of machine used in the test; second, Radiophone; third, Saturn. Quite a number of novelties were shown, including a sound-box with an ordinary wooden pill box for shell, queer diaphragms of tin, etc. An original H.M.V. model of the earliest type, in a wonderful state of preservation was brought along by Vice-President Mr. Milby. A Chinese solo and Egyptian orchestra records from China and Egypt, brought from abroad by one of the members proved rather amusing.—B. McNATTY PALMER, Hon. Recording Secretary.

CITY OF YORK GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.—A Public Recital was held on February 21st at the Society's headquarters. The prospect of a demonstration of the Clifphone drew a large attendance and the machine amply repaid for the interest shown, and quite justified the many claims made for it. The programme was excellent and the machine helped a great deal towards making the evening the success it undoubtedly was. A *Paraphrase de Concert* (Verdi—Liszt), Alfred Cortot; *The Song of the Volga Boatmen* (Gaisberg), Chaliapine; *Ombra mai fu* (Serse—Handel), Caruso; and *Entry of the Gods* (*Das Rheingold*—Wagner), Royal Albert Hall Orchestra, were the best items.—C. S. K. LEONARD, Hon. Recording Secretary.

SHEFFIELD GRAMOPHONE AND PHONOGRAPH SOCIETY.—At our headquarters on February 5th we had the pleasure of a visit from the Gramophone Company's representative, Mr. H. L. Rink. The programme took the form of a talk on the gramophone, with demonstrations, followed by the rendition of a selection of records. The arrangements had been made with a thoroughness typical of H.M.V., a range of cabinet models, etc., being provided, not to mention the artistic programmes bearing the familiar trade mark. Mr. Rink briefly outlined the history and evolution of the talking machine and made amusing reference to the suspicion originally cast on the gramophone by great artists in its earlier days. Our lecturer brought with him and played an interesting relic of the past in the form of a record of a popular song and bearing Emile Berliner's name as the maker. This disc was about the size of a present-day nursery record and naturally sounded, well, to say the least of it, very quaint. Fortunately some "slight" improvements have since been made. So far as the actual demonstrations were concerned, Mr. Rink himself accompanied a record of the song *Sympathy* by Walter Hyde and, in addition, a violin solo. He also played a record (made by himself) of syncopated music, from which certain bars in the score had purposely been omitted. These latter were added by Mr. Rink at the piano. Needless to say, he acquitted himself very creditably, and it illustrated how useful the gramophone can prove in helping to teach the art of accompaniment. In order to show the perfection and precision attained in the mechanism of H.M.V. machines, two instruments were synchronised, each playing a copy of the same record, the result, of course being that both reproductions merged into one, thereby proving perfect tempo. The programme of records subsequently played included many vocal and instrumental gems, embracing items by Heifetz, Galli-Curci, Amato, Caruso, Elman, etc., etc. At the conclusion of the programme Messrs. How and Rose fittingly proposed and seconded a vote of thanks to the Gramophone Co., Ltd., and Mr. Rink, who modestly replied. We hope we shall have his presence again on some future occasion. The complete series of H.M.V. *The Yeomen of the Guard* records was the principal feature on February 19th, and the various items were well rendered by the respective artists. This opera is probably as popular as any of the Gilbert and Sullivan works and, as the records were made under the supervision of Mr. R. D'Oyley Carte, they naturally leave little to be desired. The competition was for instrumental solos and many records of merit were entered. The decision went in favour of *Zapateado* (Heifetz) owned by Secretary Acton. Last year Mr. Holmes and Mr. Marsden each proffered to

present a celebrity record to the two members who introduced the largest number of new members during 1923. The result was duly announced, Mr. Beeson and the undersigned being the successful ones. Mr. Holmes has generously renewed his offer, on the same terms, for the current year, so all ye enthusiasts be up and doing, a 7s. 6d. record goes to the one who heads the list.—THOS. H. BROOKS, Hon. Recording Secretary.

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT GRAMOPHONE AND PHONOGRAPH SOCIETY.—The enthusiastic support accorded to British music and musicians is to many of us the most welcome feature of the marked revival in musical matters which has been manifest of recent years. And it is with a lively sense of satisfaction and gratification that we acknowledge the enterprise and perception of the leading recording companies in publishing so many records of the best work of our native composers. "All British" evenings are becoming quite commonplace features in the syllabuses of Gramophone Societies and the Liverpool Society on Wednesday, February 6th, were treated by Mr. T. N. Riddick—a good Scotsman, by the way—to a nicely chosen and admirably rendered "All English" programme. The items which as far as possible were arranged in chronological order—served to show the rich gifts of melody and the creative powers of a few composers of our own race whose works deserve fuller recognition. Purcell was represented by four items, all vocal, *Arise ye Subterranean Winds* (Norman Allin), *Dido's Lament* (Edna Thornton), *I Attempt from Love's Sickness to Fly* (Hubert Eisdell), and *Passing by* (Walter Glynn), these serving to illustrate his greatness and charm. The moderns were well represented; Quilter, Vaughan Williams, Bridge, Elgar and Holst all had a place in the programme. The tuneful and clever *Children's Overture* of the first named makes, of course, a wide appeal and the excellent Columbia records by the New Queen's Hall Light Orchestra have gained a well-deserved popularity. Both of the Holst suites for military bands, that in E flat and its companion in F—the latter included in the programme—are unique and unsurpassed in their class and the fine recordings of them now available bring out very effectively the brilliant weaving of the score and the rich and colourful tone.

At the second February meeting, held on Wednesday 20th, Mr. W. J. Riddick presented a miscellaneous programme in which was included many fine though uncommon selections. There was the striking *Standchen* of Richard Strauss, sung—no doubt authoritatively—by Elena Gerhardt, but nevertheless leaving one, in spite of attentive listening, doubtful as to its real merit and intention. To some there is always the suspicion that, even in his apparently more serious moments Strauss is writing with his tongue in his cheek. (For the writer the spirit of *Till* pervades even his *Tod und Verklärung*.) A trifle by Cyril Scott, *The Blackbirds Song*, though possessing less distinction and charm than other songs of his—for instance, *Lullaby*—yet serves to show that the younger British school have a flair for writing very attractive and effective numbers. Mrs. Kennedy Fraser in quite a different style evinces equal merit in the series of *Songs of the Hebrides*, one of which was included among the selections played. Both these numbers were recorded by Olga Haley, who sings them with ability and sympathy. The *Extase Reverie* of Louis Ganne, played by Catterall, Squire and Murdoch, is another record of much grace and feeling and is played by the talented trio with fine precision, balance, and tunefulness. The writer found keen enjoyment in the record of the Andante from the *Quartette in A minor* of Brahms, delightfully rendered by the Lener String Quartette. One is inclined to wonder, on hearing this and other recent recordings of Brahms, what gave rise to the notion, prevalent not many years ago, that his compositions—and perhaps in an even greater degree those of Bach—were marked by a classical austerity and a rigid, intricate formalism which gave them the character of unentertaining ponderous, inscrutable works. As both these composers seem likely to be better represented in the future catalogues of the principal recording companies the false conception regarding their works is happily about to be reversed.—J. W. HARWOOD, Recording Secretary.

